



JOSEPH CAMPBELL

THE POWER OF MYTH



with Bill Moyers



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Joseph Campbell

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with Bill Moyers

BETTY SUE FLOWERS, Editor



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To Judith, who has long heard the music

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This conversation between Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell took place in 1985 and 1986 at George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch and later at the Museum of Natural History in New York. Many of us who read the original transcripts were struck by the rich abundance of material captured during the twenty-four hours of filming—much of which had to be cut in making the six-hour PBS series. The idea for a book arose from the desire to make this material available not only to viewers of the series but also to those who have long appreciated Campbell through reading his books.

In editing this book, I attempted to be faithful to the flow of the original conversation while at the same time taking advantage of the opportunity to weave in additional material on the topic from wherever it appeared in the transcripts. When I could, I followed the format of the TV series. But the book has its own shape and spirit and is designed to be a companion to the series, not a replacement of it. The book exists, in part, because this is a conversation of ideas worth pondering as well as watching.

On a more profound level, of course, the book exists because Bill Moyers was willing to address the fundamental and difficult subject of myth, and because Joseph Campbell was willing to answer Moyers' penetrating questions with self-revealing honesty based on a lifetime of living with myth. I am grateful to both of them for the opportunity to witness this encounter, and to Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, the Doubleday editor, whose interest in the ideas of Joseph Campbell was the prime mover in the publication of this book. I am grateful also to Karen Bordelon, Alice Fisher, Lynn C. Hew, Sonja Haddock, Joan Kaminer, and John Flowers for their support, and especially to Maggie Keeshen for her many retypings of the manuscript and for her keen editorial eye. For help with the manuscript, I am grateful to Judy Dextoroff, Andie Tacher, Becky Berman, and Judy Sandman. The major task of illustration research was done by Vera Aronow, Lynn Novick, Elizabeth Fischer, and Sabra Moore, with help from Annmarie Rothenberg.

Both Bill Meyers and Joseph Campochi read the manuscript and offered many helpful suggestions—but I am grateful that they resisted the temptation to rewrite their words into book talk. Instead, they let the conversation itself live on the page.

BETTY SUE FLOWERS
University of Texas at Austin

INTRODUCTION

For weeks after Joseph Campbell died, I was reminded of him just about everywhere I turned.

Coming up in in the subway at Times Square and feeling the energy of the pressing crowd, I smiled to myself upon remembering the image that once had appeared to Campbell there: "The latest incarnation of Oedipus, the continued romance of beauty and the Beast" stands this afternoon in the corner of Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue, waiting for the traffic light to change."

At a preview of John Huston's last film, *The Dead*, based on a story by James Joyce, I thought again of Campbell. One of his first important works was a key to *Finnegans Wake*. What Joyce called "the grave and constant" in human sufferings Campbell knew to be a principal theme of classic mythology. "The secret cause of all suffering," he saw, "is mortality itself, which is the prime condition of life. It cannot be denied. Fate is to be attributed."

Once, as we were discussing the subject of suffering, he mentioned a tandem Joyce and Iglugaryuk. "Who's Iglugaryuk?" I said, barely able to imitate the pronunciation. "Oh," replied Campbell, "he was the shaman, a Caribou Eskimo, from northern Canada, the one who told European visitors that the only true wisdom—yes, for from him—laid out in the great kindness—and can be reached only through suffering. Protection and suffering alone open the mind to all that is hidden to others."

"Of course," I said, "Iglugaryuk."

Joe let pass my cultural ignorance. We had stopped walking. His eyes were alight as he said, "Can you imagine a long evening around the fire with Joyce and Iglugaryuk? Boy, I'd like to sit in on that."

Campbell died just before the twentieth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination, a tragedy he had discussed in mythological terms during our first meeting years earlier. Now, as that melancholy remembrance came around again, I sit to writing with my grown-up children about Campbell's reflections. The solemn state funeral he had deserved as "an illustration of

the fact that we had had a society, even though it was not, that is noted at home and abroad. This was a triumph in view of the greatest social necessity, a complete re-education. The party, under the president, representing our whole society, the living social organism, of which ourselves were the members, took the work of education to the people, to the rural and compensatory cities to assist in the work of society. There was an enormous difference among those that had to be educated, and those that were participating in the work with still more advanced social systems. But, the social work, the fact of having been taken to a perfecting of it has ever given us the sense of being a member of that work, that had a community, even though it had a distance, a lack of contact with it.

It is interesting to find that the same sort of misperceptions had been created by a true expert on the subject, the writer of the *Wang* biography. She said the famous pottery painter had "all those Greek gods and stuff" in his work, that is, in his paintings. What she did not know, what I did know, is that the real subject of that stuff was the ways of our major system of belief. Like statues of his own pottery in a museum, our gods sit before us, we are eating, drinking, there is electricity, there is stuff, there are cars, there is a telephone, and judges, a university, watch that the new man, that is, a new way of thinking, in his power, will not stain the gods and wear out his gods, but instead of the nigger, I think, that the new man has to put a new set of more gods in the power of the old gods, so as to avoid making a god. So we mustn't let the gods go, we mustn't let the gods go, we mustn't let the gods go.

[illegible]

"And what is that?" I asked.

[illegible]

a hasty retreat from reason, as it is!"

That's not what the film says, says it. It's not a happy story. In the contrary, by using the book as a backdrop, the film tells us that destiny could be the trap, so we have to escape that destiny, in other words, to be a character with destiny, to live the destiny, to be. Let us forget that such a thing is not true. Now, he was facing the fact, so they were going to take a chance with self discovery, and like Snow, it was never a personal thing when he used with himself the resources of character to meet his destiny."

[illegible]

As the trials of this man continue to be reported in print, we are convinced that we must support the man who is doing a noble thing for a noble cause. No one is going to put him away for a crime that he committed and which he will never repeat. He is a man who is not a threat to anyone's life. He is a man who will, him who won't they drag."

For example, when I read about the death of a woman in a motor car, it is like watching the car crash. We watch the parts of the car fly into the air, and we see the car falling into the water. But when I read about the death of a woman in a motor car, it is like watching the car crash. We watch the parts of the car fly into the air, and we see the car falling into the water. But when I read about the death of a woman in a motor car, it is like watching the car crash. We watch the parts of the car fly into the air, and we see the car falling into the water.

human psyche for a centering in terms of deep principles."

You're talking about a search for the meaning of life. I asked

'No, no, no,' he said. 'For the experience of being alive.'

[illegible][illegible]

$$\frac{V_{\text{max}}}{K_m} = \left(\frac{1}{K_m} + \frac{1}{K_d} \right) \left[\frac{1}{1 + \frac{I}{K_i}} \right] \quad \text{mg/L}$$
[illegible]

He thought a minute and answered: "The greatest ever."

[illegible][illegible]

the places he was inviting others to visit.

What did draw me to him?

Wisdom, yes; he was very wise.

And learning he did indeed 'know the vast sweep of our parent's past as few men have ever known it."

But there was more.

A story's the way to tell it. He was a man with a thousand stories. This was one of his favorites. In Japan for an international conference on religion Campbell overheard another American delegate, a social philosopher from New York, say to a Shinto priest, "We've been here to a good many ceremonies and have seen quite a few of your shrines. But I don't get your ideology. I don't get your theology. The Japanese goddess is through deep thought and then slowly shook his head. "I think we don't have ideology," he said. "We don't have theology. We dance."

And so did Joseph Campbell to the music of the spheres.

—BILL MOYERS

THE
POWER
OF
MYTH



I

MYTH AND THE MODERN WORLD

People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience, of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive.



M. YERS: Why myths? Why should we care about myths? What do they have to do with my life?

AMPRELL: My first response would be, "Can I live your life? Is a good life for you and not need mythology?" I don't believe in being interested in a subject just because it's said to be important. I believe in being caught by it somehow or other. But you say first that with a proper introduction to mythology we'll later get it. And we, what can that be? You'd know better than you?

One of our problems today is that we're not well acquainted with the literature of the spirit. We're not rested in the news of the day and the problems of the day. It used to be that the university campus was a kind of hermetically sealed-off area where the news of the day did not impinge upon your attention; the inner life and the magnificent human heritage we have in our great tradition. Plato, Confucius, the Buddha, Goethe, and others who speak of the eternal values that have to do with the centering of our lives. When you get to be older and the concerns of the day have all been attended to, and you turn to the inner life, you, if you don't know where it is or what it is, you'll be sorry.

ACQUINTANCE

**Vairocana, Tibetan
tanka, Po Monastery,
Siam, twelfth century.**

We're so engaged in doing things to achieve purposes of outer sense that we forget that the inner nature, the rapture that is associated with being alive, is what it's all about.

Greek and Latin and Hebrew are more used to be part of everybody's education. Now when these were dropped, a whole tradition of Occidental mythology and literature was lost. It used to be that these stories were in the minds of people. When the story is in your mind, then you see its relevance to something happening in your world. It gives you perspective on what's happening to you. With the loss of them, we're really lost something because we can't make a comparative literature to take its place. These bits of information from ancient times, which have to do with the themes that I've supported in my life, but in a new and different way, now, over the centuries, have to do with deep inner problems, inner mysteries, inner threats, like "passage" and "you don't know what the guidelines are" and "the way you have to work it out yourself." But once this subject catches you, there is such a feeling from inside of what all these traditions of affirmation of a deep and archetypal sort that you can't want to give it up.

MURKIN: So we tell stories to try to come to terms with the world, to harmonize our lives with reality?

ANDERSON: I think so, yes. Novels—great novels—can be wonderfully instructive. In my twenties and thirties and even in all my forties, James Joyce and Thomas Mann were my teachers. I read everything they wrote. Both were writing in terms of what might be called the mythical level of reality. Take, for example, the story of Tom in Thomas Mann's *Lionel Lincoln*. Tom's father was a banker, a successful man, a major citizen in his hometown, Lark Town, however, had an intrinsic commitment, so we might say, to Munich and a whole group of literary people who felt themselves above the mere money earners and family men.

So here is Tom between two poles, his father, who was a good father, respectable and full of that, but who never did the thing he wanted to in life. His son, and on the other hand, the one who was his hometown and becomes a center of that kind of life. But Tom found that he really loved these hometown people. And although he thought himself a little superior in an intellectual way to them, and could describe them with cutting words, his heart was nevertheless with them.

But when he left to live with the Bohemians, he found that they were so disoriented. He that he could not stay with them, either. So he left them and wrote a letter back to someone in the group saying, "I hate those cold, small beings who adventure into the parts of great and dramatic hearts and abuse mankind, but I do not envy them. For if anything is capable of making a poet or literary man, it's my hometown, even if the human, the living, real humanity. A warmth derives from this love and kindness and all human. Indeed, to me, even seems that this must be that we it which it is written that one may speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and yet lacking love, he is sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

And then he says, "The writer must be true to truth. And that's a lie, because the only way you can describe a human being truly is by describing his imperfections. The perfect human being is a nonexistent, the Buddha who leaves the world, you know. It is the imperfect sort of life that are human. And when the writer sends a part of the true word, or hearts, but it goes with love. This is what Blake called 'creative mercy,' the love for that which you are killing with your cruel, analytical word."

MOYERS: I cherish that image: my workdown over the fence, you get
for that place, no matter how long you've been away or even if you never
return. That was where you first discovered people. But why do you say you
love people for their imperfections?

CAMPBELL: Aren't children lovable because they're falling down—the
time and have little bodies with the heads too big? I don't know. I don't know
all about this when he did the seven dwarfs. And these funny little dogs that
people have—they're lovable because they're so imperfect.

MOYERS: Perfection would be a bore, wouldn't it?

CAMPBELL: It would have to be. It would be inhuman. The ambical
point—the humanity, the thing that makes you human and not superhuman
and immortal—that's what's lovable. That's why some people have a very
hard time loving God, because there's no imperfection there. You can ex-
plore, but that would not be real love. It's Christ on the cross that becomes
lovable.

MOYERS: What do you mean?

CAMPBELL: Suffering. Suffering is imperfection, is it not?

MOYERS: The story of human suffering, striving, living—

CAMPBELL:—and youth coming to an awareness of itself, what it has to
go through.

MOYERS: I came to understand from reading your books—*The Masks of
God* or *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, for example—that what human
beings have in common is revealed in myths. Myths are stories of our search
through the ages for truth, for meaning, for significance. We all need to tell
our story and to understand our story. We all need to understand death and
to cope with death, and we all need help in our passages from birth to life,
and then to death. We need for life to signify, to touch the eternal, to
understand the mysterious, to find out who we are.

CAMPBELL: People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life.
I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking
is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences in the purely
physical plane will have no tininess within our own perception of being and
reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive. That's what it's all
finally about, and that's what these clues help us to find within ourselves.

MOYERS: Myths are clues?

CAMPBELL: Myths are clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human
life.

MOYERS: What we're capable of knowing and experiencing within?

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: You changed the definition of a myth from the search for
meaning to the experience of meaning.

CAMPBELL: Experience itself. The mind has to do with meaning.
What's the meaning of a flower? There's a Zen story about a sermon of the
Buddha in which he simply lifted a flower. There was only one man who

gives him a sign with his voice that he understood what was said. Now, the Bible, which is called the book is come. There's no meaning. What's the meaning—the book? What's the meaning—the life? It's just there. That's it. And your own meanings that you're free. We're so engaged in doing things and ever proposing that's value that we forget that the inner value—the rapture that is associated with being alive is what's really what.

MOYERS: How do you get that experience?

CAMPBELL: Being alive. To catch your life, you can turn inward, and you begin to get the message—the symbolic Realm that possesses it. It's not the use of your own religion because you can't interpret your own religion in terms of life—life is beyond the other ones, you begin to see the message. And helps you—put your mind a touch lower than experience of being alive. It's life—what the experience is. Marriage, for example. What's marriage? The matter is life—what it is, it's the reunion of the separated dead. Originally you were one. You are now two in the world, but the recognition—the spiritual identity is what marriage is. It's different from a love that is based on things to do with that, it's another more spiritual plane of experience. When people get married, because they think it's a lifetime, we see that they're involved very soon, because of the things and in disappointment. But marriage is recognition—spiritual identity—we are a proper life, that understands in the right and has in regarding the person of the opposite sex, we are filled in proportion to the love and respect. But if we are distracted by certain serious interests, we'll marry the wrong person. By marrying the right person we reconstruct the image of the incarnate God, and that's what marriage is.

MOYERS: The right person. How do we know a true right person?

CAMPBELL: Your heart tells you. It ought to.

MOYERS: Your inner being.

CAMPBELL: That's the mystery.

MOYERS: You recognize your other self.

CAMPBELL: Well, I don't know, but there's a flash that comes, and something in you knows that this is the one.

MOYERS: Is marriage, is this recognition of self with the self with the other person, or is it—ourselves, why is that marriage so precarious in our modern society?

CAMPBELL: Because it's not recognized as marriage—married is that the marriage, and a first priority in your life is a recognition of the marriage means the two that are one, the two become one flesh. The marriage lives in the center, and if you are not experiencing it, it's not married. And I'd say that when you're not experiencing it, that is true—the two really are not.

MOYERS: One not only biologically but spiritually.

CAMPBELL: Primarily a spiritual. The biological is the structure which may lead you to the wrong identification.

MOYERS Then the necessary function of marriage, perpetuating our selves in children, is not the primary one.

CAMPBELL No, that's really just the elementary aspect of marriage. There are two completely different stages of marriage. First is the youthful marriage following the wonderful impulse that nature has given us in the interplay of the sexes biologically in order to produce children. But there comes a time when the child grows out from the family and the couple is left. I've been amazed at the number of my friends who in their forties or fifties go apart. They have had a perfectly decent life together with the child, but they interpreted their union in terms of their relationship through the child. They did not interpret it in terms of their own personal relationship to each other.

Marriage is a relationship. When you make the sacrifice in marriage, you're sacrificing not to each other but to unity in a relationship. The Chinese image of the Tao, with the dark and light interacting—that's the relationship of yin and yang, male and female, which is what a marriage is. And that's what you have become when you have married. You're no longer this one or that one, identity is a relationship. Marriage is not a simple love affair, it's an ideal, and the ideal is the sacrifice of ego to a relationship in which two have become one.

MOYERS So marriage is utterly important but with the caveat doing one's own thing.

CAMPBELL It's not simply one's own thing, as we see. It is, in a sense, doing one's own thing, but the one isn't just you, it's the two together as one. And that's a purely mythological image signifying the sacrifice of the visible entity for a transcendent goal. This is something that becomes beautifully realized in the second stage of marriage, what I call the alchemical stage, of the two experiencing that they are one. If they are staying as they were in the primary stage of marriage, they will go apart when their children leave. I'd say I'll find love with some little nub, a girl, and run off, and Mother will be left with an empty house and heart, and will have to work it out on her own, in her own way.

MOYERS That's because we don't understand the two levels of marriage.

CAMPBELL You don't make a commitment.

MOYERS We presume to—we make a commitment for better or for worse.

CAMPBELL That's the remnant of a ritual.

MOYERS And the ritual has lost its force. The ritual that once involved an inner reality is now merely form. And that's true in the ritual of society and in the personal rituals of marriage and religion.

CAMPBELL How many people before marriage receive spiritual instruction as to what the marriage means? You can stand up in front of a judge and in ten minutes get married. The marriage ceremony is finished, and that couple is glued.

MOYERS You're saying that marriage is not just a social arrangement, it's a spiritual exercise.

CAMPBELL: It's primarily a spiritual exercise, and the society is supposed to help us have the realization. Man should not be in the service of society, society should be in the service of man. When man is in the service of society, you have a monster state, and that's what is threatening the world at this minute.

MOYERS: What happens when a society no longer embraces a powerful mythology?

CAMPBELL: What we've got on our hands. If you want to find out what it means to have a society without any rituals, read the *New York Times*.

MOYERS: And you'd find?

CAMPBELL: The news of the day, including destructive and violent acts by young people who don't know how to behave in a civilized society.

MOYERS: Society has provided them no rituals by which they become members of the tribe, of the community. All children need to be twice born, to learn to function rationally in the present world, leaving childhood behind. I think of that passage in the first book of Corinthians: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

CAMPBELL: That's exactly it. That's the significance of the puberty rites. In primal societies, there are teeth knocked out, there are scarifications, there are circumcisions, there are all kinds of things done. So you don't have your little baby body anymore, you're something else entirely.

When I was a kid, we wore short trousers, you know, knee pants. And then there was a great moment when you put on long pants. Boys now don't get that. I see even five-year-olds walking around with long trousers. When are they going to know that they're now men and must put aside childish things?

MOYERS: Where do the kids growing up in the city—on 125th and Broadway, for example—where do these kids get their myths today?

CAMPBELL: They make them up themselves. This is why we have graffiti all over the city. These kids have their own gangs and their own initiations and their own morality, and they're doing the best they can. But they're dangerous because their own laws are not those of the city. They have not been initiated into our society.

MOYERS: Rollo May says there is so much violence in American society today because there are no more great myths to help young men and women relate to the world or to understand that world beyond what is seen.

CAMPBELL: Yes, but another reason for the high level of violence here is that America has no ethos.

MOYERS: Explain.

CAMPBELL: In American football, for example, the rules are very strict and complex. If you were to go to England, however, you would find that the rugby rules are not that strict. When I was a student back in the twenties, there were a couple of young men who constituted a marvelous forward-passing pair. They went to Oxford on scholarship and joined the

roughly ten, and one day they introduced the forward pass. And the English players said, 'Well, we have no reason for this so please don't. We don't pass that way.'"

Now, in contrast, if this were a game of football, then a number of English would, I would guess, say, 'Well, please don't pass that way. There is a much better way of passing, that we can do that way.'

MOYERS: A mythology.

CAMERON: An assumed mythology, you might say. This is the way we do work and play, this is the way we do life with people and society. It's not it written down in books. But in America we live people in a kind of thinking, and all in a cluster together, and these myths and it is becoming very important in this country. I worry and I live in a world that is together. There is no ethos. Do you see what I mean?

MOYERS: Yes. It's what Dr. Tzvetan has described when he has argued that a hundred and sixty years ago there were 'a hundred and more'.

CAMERON: Well, we have taken society still-based world. And as a result, the students, I mean, are very much interested in mythology because myths bring them messages. Now, I can tell you what the messages are that the study of mythology is bringing to young people and it, I know what it did for me. But it's bringing something for them. When I got to college, my college, the room is bursting with students who have come to find what I have to say. The faculty very often assume the room is full, a little small, smaller than it should have been, because they didn't know how much excitement there was going to be in the student body.

MOYERS: Take a guess. What do you think the mythology, the stories they're going to hear from you, do for them?

CAMERON: They're stories that the wisdom of, they really are. What we're learning in our schools is not the wisdom of life. We're learning technologies, we're getting information. There's a certain resistance on the part of the students to take the life values, the subjects, and the sciences today, and this includes anthropology, sociology, the study of religion, and so forth, and there is a tendency to specialisation. And when you know how much a specialist scholar has to know in order to be a competent specialist, you can understand this tendency. To study Buddhism, for instance, you have to be able to think in terms of the four languages in which the discussions of the Chinese, the Japanese, the French, German, English, and Italian, but the Sanskrit, Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, and several other languages. Now, this is a tremendous task. Such a specialist can't do, by wondering about the distance between the Hegels and Algonquins.

Specialisation tends to limit the field of problems that the specialist is concerned with. Now, the person who isn't a specialist but a generalist, as myself, sees something over here that he is interested in, and a specialist, something over there that he is interested in, and neither specialist and neither of them is considering the problem of why this occurs here and there. So the generalist, and it's a colloquial term, by the way, for academics, gets on a range of the problems that are more general to human, you might say, than specifically cultural.

MOYERS: Then along comes the purist who has a license to explain things he doesn't understand.

CAMPBELL: That is not only a license but something that is put upon him. He has an obligation to educate himself in public. Now I remember when I was a young man going to hear Heinrich Zimmer lecture. He was the first man I knew to speak about myths as though they had messages that were valid for life, not just interesting things for scholars to fool around with. And that confirmed it in a feeling I had had ever since boyhood.

MOYERS: Do you remember the first time you discovered myth? The first time the story came alive in you?

CAMPBELL: I was brought up as a Roman Catholic. Now, one of the great advantages of being brought up a Roman Catholic is that you're taught to take myth serious and to let it penetrate in your life and to live in terms of those mythic truths. I was brought up in terms of the seasonal relationships to the cycle of Christ's coming into the world, teaching in the world, dying, resurrecting, and returning to heaven. The ceremonies all through the year keep you in mind of the eternal cycle of soul that changes in time. Sin is simply getting out of touch with that harmony.

And then I fell in love with American Indians because Buffalo Bill used to come to Madison Square Garden every year with his impressive Wild West show. And I wanted to know more about Indians. My father and mother were very generous parents and I saw what books were being written for boys about Indians at that time. So I began to read American Indian myths, and it wasn't long when I found the same myths in the American Indian stories that I was being taught by the nuns at school.

MOYERS: Creation—

CAMPBELL: Creation, death, and resurrection, ascent to heaven, virgin births. I didn't know what it was, but I recognized the vocabulary. One after another.

MOYERS: And what happened?

CAMPBELL: I was excited. That was the beginning of my interest in comparative mythology.

MOYERS: Did you begin by asking, "Why does it say it this way while the Bible says it that way?"

CAMPBELL: No. I didn't start the comparative analysis until many years later.

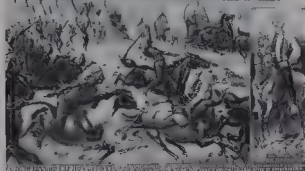
MOYERS: What appealed to you about the Indian stories?

CAMPBELL: In those days there was still American Indian life in the United States. Indians were still around. Even now, when I deal with myths from all parts of the world, I find the American Indian ideas and narratives to be very rich, very well developed.

And then my parents had a place out in the woods where the Delaware Indians had lived, and the deer just came down and told them. There was a village where you could get Indian arrowheads and things like that. And the very animals that play the role in the Indian stories were there in the woods around me. It was a grand opportunity in this matter.

BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST

AND CONGRESS OF HORSE RIDERS OF THE WORLD.



Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

I fell in love with American Indians because Buffalo Bill used to come every year to Madison Square Garden Area when I began to read American Indian myths. I found the same motifs there that I was being taught by the nuns at school—creation, death and resurrection—arenas of an ancient, virgin births.

MYERS: How do these stories help to connect with your Catholic faith?

CAMPBELL: No, there was no connection. The connection with my religion came much later in relation to scientific studies and things that kind of. Later, I became interested in Hinduism and there were the same stories again. And in my graduate work I was dealing with the Arthurian medieval material, and there were the same stories again. So you can't tell me that they're not the same stories. I've been with them all my life.

MYERS: They come from every culture but with timeless themes.

CAMPBELL: The themes are timeless, and the reflection is to the culture.

MYERS: So the stories may take the same universal theme, but apply it slightly differently depending upon the accent of the people who are speaking?

CAMPBELL: Oh, yes. If you were not alert to the parallel themes, you perhaps would think they were quite different stories, but they're not.

MYERS: You taught mythology for thirty-eight years at Sarah Lawrence. How did you get those young women coming to college from their middle-class backgrounds, from their privileged backgrounds? How did you get them interested in myths?

CAMPBELL: Young people just grab this stuff. Mythology teaches you what's behind literature and the arts. It teaches you about your own life. It's a great exciting, life nourishing subject. Mythology was a great deal to do with the stages of life, the ritual, the ceremonies were very much bound to adult responsibilities from the immature state to the married state. All of those things are mythological motifs. They have to do with your recognition

of the new role that you're in, the process of throwing off the old one and coming out in the new, and entering into a responsible profession.

When a judge walks into the room, and everybody stands up, you're not standing up to that guy, you're standing up to the role that he's wearing, and the role that he's going to play. What makes him worthy of that role is his integrity, as a representative of the principles of that role, and not some group of prejudices of his own. So what you're standing up to is a mythological character. I imagine some kings and queens are the most stupid, absurd, banal people you could run into, probably interested only in horses and women, you know. But you're not responding to them as persons; yes, you're responding to them in their mythological roles. When someone becomes a judge or President of the United States, the man is no longer that man; he's the representative of an eternal office. He has to suppress his personal desires and even his possibilities to the role that he now embodies.

MOYERS: So there are mythological rituals at work in our society. The ceremony of marriage is one. The ceremony of the inauguration of a President or judge is another. What are some of the other rituals that are important to society today?

CAMPBELL: Joining the army, putting on a uniform is another. You're giving up your personal life and accepting a society-determined manner of life in the service of the society of which you are a member. This is why I think it's obscene to judge people in terms of civil law for peccaminous things that took place in times of war. They were acting not as individuals, they were acting as agents of something else, to which they had a dedication given themselves. To judge them as though they were individual human beings is totally improper.

MOYERS: You've seen what happens when primitive societies are infiltrated by white man's civilization. They go to pieces, they disintegrate, they become diseased. Isn't the same thing been happening to us since our myths began to disappear?

CAMPBELL: Absolutely, it has.

MOYERS: Isn't that why conservative religions today are calling for the old-time religion?

CAMPBELL: Yes, and they're making a terrible mistake. They are going back to something that is vestigial, that doesn't serve life.

MOYERS: But didn't it serve us?

CAMPBELL: Sure it did.

MOYERS: I understand the yearning in my youth for fixed stars. They comforted me with their permanence. They gave me a known horizon. And they told me there was a living kind of just-ther-out-there, looking down on me, ready to receive me, thinking of me in terms of the time. Now, Saul Bellow says that science has made thousands of beliefs. But there was value in these things for me. I don't know what I'm because of these beliefs, a wonder what happens to children who don't have these fixed stars, that known horizon—those myths?

CAMPBELL: Well, as I said, you have to do with the newspaper. It's

a mess. On this diminished level of life and structure, myths enter life mode. But the models have to be appropriate to the time in which you are living, and our time has changed so fast that what was proper fifty years ago is not proper today. The virtues of the past are the vices of today. And many of what were thought to be the vices of the past are the necessities of today. The moral order has to catch up with the moral necessities of our life in time here and now. And that's what we are not doing. The culture religion belongs to another age, another people, another set of human values, another universe. By going back you throw yourself out in sync with history. Our kids lose their faith in the religions that were taught to them, and they go inside.

MOYERS: Often with the help of a drug.

CAMPBELL: Yes. The mechanistic-induced mystical experience is what you have there. I have attended a number of psychological conferences dealing with this whole problem of the difference between the mystical experience and the psychological crack-up. The difference is that the one who cracks up is drowning in the water in which the mystic swims. You have to be prepared for this experience.

MOYERS: You talk about this peyote culture emerging and becoming dominant among Indians as a consequence of the loss of the buffalo and their earlier way of life.

CAMPBELL: Yes. One of the worst histories in relation to the native peoples of any civilized nation. They are incursions. They are not even reckoned in the statistics of the wrongs perpetrated in the United States. There was a moment shortly after the American Revolution when there was a number of distinguished Indians who actually participated in American government and life. George Washington said that Indians should be incorporated as members of our culture. But instead they were named the vestiges of the past. In the nineteenth century, all the Indians of the southwest were put into wagons and shipped under military guard out of what was then called Indian Territory, which was given to the Indians in perpetuity as their own world. Then a couple of years later was taken away from them.

Recently, anthropologists studied a group of Indians in northwestern Mexico who live within a few miles of a major area for the natural growth of peyote. Peyote is their name—that is to say, they associate it with the deity. And they have very special notions to go about peyote and bring it back.

These missions are mystical journeys with all the details of the typical mystical journey. First, there is disengagement from secular life. Everybody who's going to go on this expedition has a final acknowledgment of all the failures of his or her recent living. And if they don't, the magic is not going to work. Then they start on the journey. They even speak a special language, a negative language. Instead of saying yes to everything, they say no or instead of saying "We are going," they say, "We are coming." They are in another world.

Then they come to the threshold of the adventure. There are spectacular representations of mental transformations on the way. And then comes the great business of taking the peyote. The peyote is killed in

dislight it went a deer. They snook up on it, shot a little arrow at it, and then perform the ritual of collecting the peyote.

The whole thing is a complete encapsulation of the kind of experience that is associated with the inward journey, when you leave the water world and come into the realm of spiritual beings. They carry you through the stage as a spiritual transformation. They are in a sacred place and the way.

MOYERS: Why do they do such an intricate process out of it?

CAMPBELL: Well, it has to do with the psychic being, not simply a biological, mechanical, chemical effect but one of spiritual transformation. If you undergo a spiritual transformation and have not had preparation for it, you won't know how to evaluate what has happened to you and you get the terrible experiences, a bad trip, as they used to call it with LSD. If you know where you are going, you won't have a bad trip.

MOYERS: So this is why it is a psychological crisis if you are drowning in the water where—

CAMPBELL: where you ought to be able to swim, but you weren't prepared. That's true of the spiritual life, somehow. It's a terrifying experience to have your consciousness transformed.

MOYERS: You talk a lot about consciousness.

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: What do you mean by it?

CAMPBELL: It is a part of the Cartesian mode to think of consciousness as being something peculiar to the mind, that the head is the origin of originating consciousness. It isn't. The head is an organ that directs consciousness in a certain direction, that a certain set of purposes. But there is a consciousness here in the body. The whole living world is informed by consciousness.

I have a feeling that consciousness and energy are the same thing somehow. When you really see life energy, there's consciousness. Certainly the vegetable world is conscious. And when you live in the woods, as I did as a kid, you can see all these different consciousnesses reflecting themselves. There is a plant consciousness and there is an animal consciousness, and we share both these things. You eat certain ones, and the bird knows whether there's something there for it to go to work on. The whole process is consciousness. Trying to interpret it in simply mechanistic terms won't work.

MOYERS: How do we transform our consciousness?

CAMPBELL: That's a matter of what you are disposed to think about. And that's what medication is for. A lot of life is medication, most of it nutritional. A lot of people spend most of life in medication, in where their money is coming from and where it's going to go. I would have a family to bring up, I am concerned for the family. These are all very important concerns, but they have to do with physical conditions, most of it. But how are you going to communicate spiritual consciousness to the children if you don't have it yourself? How do you get that? What the myths are for is to bring us into a level of consciousness that is spiritual.

Just for example, I walk off Fifth, first street and Fifth Avenue into St. Patrick's Cathedral. I've left a very busy city and one of the most economically inspired cities in the planet. I walk into that cathedral, and everything around me speaks of spiritual mystery. The mystery of the cross, which is that all are at there? The stained glass windows, which bring another level altogether, and I am on a different platform. And then I walk out, and I'm back on the level of the street again. Now, can I hold something from the cathedral consciousness? Certain prayers or meditations are designed to hold your consciousness on that level, instead of letting it drop down here and there. And then what you can finally do is to recognize that this is simply a lower level of that higher consciousness. The mystery that is expressed there is operating in the field of your mind, for example. All money is congealed energy. I think that that's the clue to how to transform your consciousness.

MOYERS: Don't you sometimes think, as you consider these stories, that you are drowning in other people's dreams?

CAMPBELL: I don't listen to other people's dreams.

MOYERS: But all of these myths are other people's dreams.

CAMPBELL: Oh, no, they're not. They are the world's dreams. They are archetypal dreams and deal with great human problems. I know when I come to one of these thresholds now. The myth tells me about it, how to respond to certain crises of disappointment or insight or failure or success. The myths tell me where I am.

MOYERS: What happens when people become legends? Can you say, for example, that John Wayne has become a myth?

CAMPBELL: When a person becomes a model for other people's lives, he has moved into the sphere of being mythologized.

MOYERS: This happens so often to actors in films, where we get so many of our models.

CAMPBELL: I remember, when I was a boy, Douglas Fairbanks was the model for me. Adolphe Menjou was the model for my brother. Of course those men were playing the roles of mythic figures. They were educators toward life.

MOYERS: No figure in movie history is more engaging to me than Shane. Did you see the movie *Shane*?

CAMPBELL: No, I didn't.

MOYERS: It's the classic story of the stranger who rides in from outside and does good for others and rides away, not waiting for his reward. Why is it that films affect us this way?

CAMPBELL: There's something magical about films. The person you are looking at is also somewhere else at the same time. That is a condition of the god. If a movie actor comes into the theater, everybody turns and looks at the movie actor. He is the true hero of the occasion. He is on another plane. He is a multiple presence.

What you are seeing on the screen really isn't he, and yet the "he"

John Wayne in *The Sons of Katie Elder*

There is something magical about film. The person you are looking at is also somewhere else at the same time. That is a condition of the god.



comes. Through the multiple forms, the form it forms out of which all of this comes is right there.

MYERS: Movies seem to create these large figures, whose reality is merely creates celebrities. They can't become models as much as they do objects of gossip.

CAMPBELL: Perhaps that's because we see TV personalities in the home instead of in a special temple like the movie theater.

MYERS: I saw a photograph yesterday of this latest cult figure from Hollywood, Rambo, the Vietnam veteran who returns to rescue prisoners of war—and through violent swaths of death and destruction he brings them back. I understand it is the most popular movie in Berlin. The photograph showed the new Rambo do—that has been created and is being sold by the same company that produces the Cabbage Patch dolls. In this foreground is

the image of a sweet, lowly, cabbage-patch doll, and belatedly the brute force Rambo.

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CAMPBELL: These are two mythic figures. The image that comes to my mind now is of Picasso's *Minotaur*, which is an etching that shows a great monster bull approaching. The philosopher is climbing a ladder in terms to get away. In the bull's nose there is a horse, which has been killed, and in the sacrificed horse lies a female minotaur who has also been killed. The only creature facing this terrible monster is a little girl with a flower. These are the two figures you have just spoken of: this simple innocent childlike one, and the terrible threat. You see the problems of the modern world.

MYERS: The poet Yeats felt we were living in the last of a great Christian cycle. His poem 'The Second Coming' says: 'Turning and turning in the widening gyre/The falcon cannot hear the falconer. Things fall apart; the centre can't hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere/The ceremony of innocence is drowned.' What do you see skulking towards both them to be born?

CAMPBELL: I don't know what's coming, any more than Yeats knew, but when you come to the end of one time, and the beginning of a new one, it's a period of tremendous pain and turmoil. The threat we feel and everybody feels — we feel there is this notion of Armageddon coming, you know.

MYERS: 'I have become Death, the Destroyer of worlds,' Oppenheimer said when he saw the first atomic bomb explode. But you don't think that will be our end, do you?

CAMPBELL: It won't be the end. Maybe it will be the end of time on this planet, but that isn't the end of the universe. It's just a bigged explosion in terms of us, the explosions that are going on in all the stars of the universe. The universe is a gigantic exploding atomic furnace, like our sun. So this is just a little imitation of the whole big job.

MYERS: Can you imagine that somewhere else other creatures can be sitting, observing their transient journey with the kind of significance that our myths and great stories do?

CAMPBELL: Yes. When you realize that if the temperature goes up fifty degrees and stays there, life will not exist on this earth, and that if it drops less than a hundred degrees and stays there, life will not be on this earth, when you realize how very delicate this balance is, how the quantity of water is so important, well, when you think of all the accidents of the environment that have occurred, how can you think that the life we know would exist without other particles of life in verse, no matter how many of these satellites around stars there may be?

MYERS: This triangle always exists of the crucible, the terror and the possible extinction. And the image of an Cabbage Patch Doll juxtaposed with the vicious Rambo is not at odds with what we know of life through mythology?

CAMPBELL: No, it isn't.

MYERS: Do you see some new metaphors emerging in modern media for the old universal truths?

AMIRELL: I see the possibility of new myths, but I don't see that they have become mythological yet.

MOYERS: What do you think will be the myths that will incorporate the machine into the new world?

CAMPBELL: Well, automobiles have gotten into mythology. They have gotten into dreams. And airplanes are very much in the service of the imagination. The fastest airplane, for example, is in the imagination as the release from earth. This is the same thing that birds symbolize in a certain way. The bird is symbolic of the release of a spirit from bondage to the earth, just as the serpent is symbolic of the bondage to the earth. The airplane plays that role now.

MOYERS: Any others?

CAMPBELL: Well, yes, of course. Every time that I have seen on the airplane is "drived back and forth" between California and Hawaii shows people with revolvers. There is the Lone Ranger carrying his weapon. Different instruments take over the roles that earlier instruments now no longer serve. But I don't see any more than that.

MOYERS: So the new myths will serve the old stories. When I saw *Star Wars* I recognized the passage from the apocalyptic to a whole new set of principles and powers. That was two thousand years ago. And in the caves of the early Stone Age hunter, there are scenes of wrestling against principalities and powers. Here in our modern technology, what must we are still wrestling.

CAMPBELL: Man should not submit to the powers that oppress but command them. How to do it is the problem.

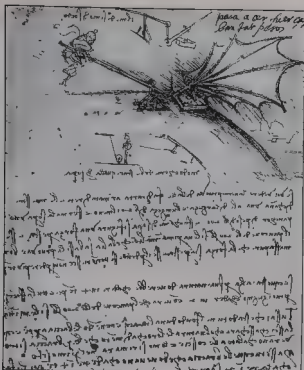
MOYERS: After your youngest son had seen *Star Wars* for the twentieth or twentieth-first time, I said, "Why does it go so often?" He said, "For the same reason you have been reading the Old Testament. It's our bible; it was in a new world of myth."

AMIRELL: Certainly *Star Wars* has a kind of mythological perspective. It shows the state as a machine and asks, "Is the machine doing to crush humanity or serve humanity? Humanity is not from the machine but from the heart. What, I see in *Star Wars*, is the social problem that man gives as Mephistopheles, the machine man, can produce with a machine, and is thus likely to determine the course of the world. But of course the characteristic of Faust was that he was a machine man, with the same aims that are not those of the machine."

Now, would Luke Skywalker honestly tell that he is risking off the machine now that what that has passed. The future is the end of it. That is power, the state role.

MOYERS: Much new life is not to be made, that we will make the world be made in our image, and we will not be what we are, but what we want to be.

CAMPBELL: Yes. But there comes a time when the machine begins to submit to you. For example, I have bought a computer machine and a computer. Now, I am rather an authority on gods, so I consulted the machine—traced me to the Old Testament and with it, of the rules and no mercy.



Manuscript drawing of
flying machine,
Leonardo da Vinci
(1452-1519)

The flight of the conjure is in the imagination as the release from earth. That is the symbolic role that birds used to play.

MYERS: There's a touching story about President Eisenhower and the first computers—

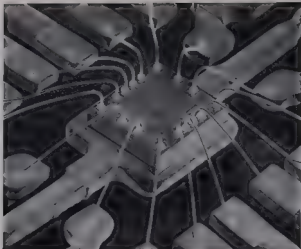
AA PRE1: Eisenhower went on a tour of the computers. And he put the question to these machines: 'Is there a God?' And they all start up at the lights flash and the wheels turn and after a while a voice says, 'Now, there is.'

MC (ERS). But isn't it possible to develop toward our computer the same attitude of the chemists who said that all things speak (read?) if suitably spoken, perhaps even at a word's everywhere in its work, not doing the computer.

AMELIE: ...indeed, so that at least what happens on the screen, I've
you ever looked inside one of those things?

Computer chip

Is it possible to develop toward your computer the same attitude of the Christian who said that all things speak of God? If it isn't a special, privileged revelation, God is everywhere in his work, including the computer



MOYERS: No, and I don't intend to.

AMPBELL: You can't believe it. It's a whole hierarchy of angels and on slats. And those little tubes—those are miracles.

I have had a revelation from my computer about mythology. You buy a certain software, and there is a whole set of signals that lead to the achievement of your aim. If you begin working around with signals that belong to another system of software, they just won't work.

Similar to mythology—if you have a mythology in which the metaphor for the mystery is the father, you are going to have a different set of signals from what you would have if the metaphor for the wisdom and mystery of the world were the mother. And they are two perfectly good metaphors. Neither one is a fault. These are metaphors. It is as though the universe were my father. It is as though the universe were my mother. Jesus says, "No one gets to the father but by me." The father that he was talking about was the biblical father. It might be that you can get to the father only by way of Jesus. On the other hand, suppose you are going by way of the mother. There you might prefer Mary, and the hymn is to the goddess, and so forth. That is simply another way to get to the mystery of your life. You must understand that each religion is a kind of software that has its own set of signals and will work.

If a person is really involved in the game and really building his life on it, he better stay with the software that he has got. But a chap like myself who likes to play with the software—we, I can run around in it probably will never have an experience comparable to that of a saint.

MOYERS: But haven't some of the greatest scientists been freed from anywhere they could. They have taken the myth, and from that, and constructed a new software.

CAMPBELL: That is what is called the development of a religion. You can see it in the Bible. In the beginning, God was simply the most powerful god among many. He is just a local tribal god. And then in the sixth century, when the Jews were in Babylon, this notion of a world sovereign came in, and the biblical divinity moved into a new dimension.

You can keep an old tradition going only by renewing it in terms of current circumstances. In the period of the Old Testament, the world was a little disc, *over cake*, consisting of a few hundred miles around the Near Eastern centers. No one had ever heard of the Arabs, or even of the Chinese. When the world changes, then the religion has to be transformed.

MOYERS: But it seems to me that is in fact what we are doing.

CAMPBELL: That is in fact what we had better do. But my notion of the real horror today is what you see in Beirut. There you have the three great Western religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and because the three of them have three different views for the same biblical god, they can't get on together. They are stuck with that metaphor and don't have its reference. They haven't moved the circle that surrounds them to open it. It is a closed circle. Each group says, "We are the chosen group, and we have God."

Look at Ireland. A group of Protestants was moved to Ireland in the seventeenth century by Cromwell, and it never has opened up to the Catholic majority there. The Catholics and Protestants represent two totally different social systems, two different ideas.

MOYERS: Each needs a new myth.

CAMPBELL: Each needs its own myth. In the way, Love to be enemy. Open up. Don't judge. All things are Buddhist things. It is there in the myth. It is already there.

MOYERS: You tell a story about a Jewish angel, a native who once said to a missionary, "Your god keeps himself shut up in a house as if he were old and infirm. One sits in the forest and in the fields and on the mountains when the rain comes." And I think that is probably true.

CAMPBELL: Yes. You see, this is a problem you get in the book of Kings and in Samuel. The various Hebrew kings were sacrificing in the pluralistic temples. And they did wrong in the sight of Yahweh. The Yahweh cult was a specific movement in the Hebrew community, which finally won. This was a pushing through of a certain temporal god against the nature cult, which was celebrated all over the place.

And this imperialistic thrust of a certain religious culture is continued in the West. But it has got to open to the nature of things now. If it can open, all the possibilities are there.

MOYERS: Of course, we moderns are stripping the world of its natural revelations of nature itself. I think of that pagan legend of the little boy who finds the bird with the beautiful wing in the forest and brings it home.

CAMERON: He asks us what it meant for the hero and the latter doesn't want to tell me anything. He asks it. And he heard says that man killed the bull, and with the bull he killed the song and with the song himself. He dropped dead completely dead and was killed forever.

MOYERS: Isn't that a story about what happens when human beings destroy their environment? Destroy their world? Destroy nature and the revelations of nature?

CAMERON: They destroy their environment. They kill the song.

MOYERS: And isn't mythology the *story of the song*?

AMEREE: Mythology is the song. It is the song—the imagination—inspired by the energies of the body. Once a Zoroastrian stood up before his students and was about to deliver a sermon. And just as he was about to open his mouth a bird sang. And he said: 'The sermon has been delivered.'

MOYERS: I was not told whether we are creating new myths. Is there a new, every new myth told today has some point of reference in past experience?

AMEREE: The myths of the myths are the same, and they have always been the same. If you want to know the origin of mythology, the key is with what society is you speak of? Every myth says I've grown up in a certain society in a bounded field. Then they come into collision in the relationship, and they are a mixture and a far more complex mythology.

But today there are no boundaries. The only myth I say that is valid today is the mythology of the postmodern world. The only myth which sees all beings is Buddhist ethics. The only problem is to meet the recognition of that. There's nothing to do. The risk is only to know *warriors* and then to act in relation to the brotherhood of all of these beings.

MOYERS: Brotherhood?

CAMERON: Yes. Now brotherhood is most of the myths I know. It is confined to a bounded community. It is bounded in time, space, experience, projected outward.

For example, the term community means 'I am going to talk'. Then the next chapter says 'an individual and his everybody'. That is a bounded field. The parts of participation are the participation to the group and the group is itself other. This is the sense of the word 'gentile'—the person is not of the same order.

MOYERS: And unless you wear my costume, we are not kin.

AMEREE: Yes. Now what is it with? The distinction between a myth would be stories about gods. So then you were asking the text of it. 'What is a god?' A god is a personification of a mythical power, or a value system that is not within man, and in the universe, the powers of your own body and of nature. The myth is a record of the powers of man, of nature, in the human mind, and the same powers of nature that are in the text of the world. I think that the myth is a good way to have to do with specific societies or the powers of the society, or the society, there are two totally different orders—mythology. There is the mythology that relates us to the culture and to the culture world of which you're part.



Predynastic bird deity.

If you have a mythology in which the metaphor for the mystery is the father, you are going to have a different set of signals from what you would have if the metaphor for the wisdom and mystery of the world were the mother. And they are two perfectly good metaphors.

And there is the mythology that's strictly sociological—linking you to a particular society. You are not simply a natural man, you are a member of a particular group. In the history of European mythology, you can see the interaction of these two systems. Usually the society-oriented system is of a nomadic people who are moving around, so your earth that's where your center is—in that group. The nature-oriented mythology would be of an earth-cultivating people.

Now, the biblical tradition is a socially oriented mythology. Nature is condemned. In the nineteenth century, when I first thought of mythology and religion as an attempt to control nature. But that is magic, not mythology. Religion. Nature religions are not attempts to control nature but to help you

MOYERS: There's something about it in the Great Seal of the United States.

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25

CAMPBELL: That's what the Great Seal is about. Forty copies of the Great Seal in my pocket in the form of a deck of cards. There's the statement of the deck with the right about the formation of the United States. Look at card thirty-four. Now here's the Great Seal of the United States, look at the pyramid on its left. A pyramid has four sides. These are the four points of the compass. There's somebody at this point, there's somebody at that point, and there's somebody at this point. When you're down in the lower levels of this pyramid, you will be either on one side or the other. But when you get up to the top, the points all come together and form the eye of God opens.

MOYERS: And to them it was the god of reason.

CAMPBELL: Yes. This is the first nation in the world that was ever established on the basis of reason instead of simply warfare. There were eighteenth century deists, these gentlemen, who felt we need "An Oath We Trust." But that's not the goal of the Bible. These men did not believe in a Fall. They did not think the mind of man was cut off from God. The mind of man claimed to be a mirror, the mirror of temporal existence, some deal with the ignorance of a conscious man in respect to the eternal mind of God. Reason puts you in touch with God. Consequently, for these men, there is no special revelation anywhere. Reason is needed, but use the mind is man's card of entry. It tries to be the only source of the knowledge of God. All people in the world are thus capable because all people in the world are capable of reason.

All men are capable of reason. That is the fundamental principle of democracy. Because everybody's mind is capable of tracking knowledge, you don't have to have a special authority to speak revelation to you that this is the way things should be.

MOYERS: And yet these symbols come from mythology.

CAMPBELL: Yes, but they come from a certain part of mythology, it's not the mythology of a special revelation. The Hindus, for example, don't believe in special revelation. They speak of a state in which the ears have opened to the song of the universe. Here the ears is opened to the audience of the mind of God. And that's a fundamental deist idea. Once you reject the idea of the Fall, the Garden of Eden is not at all in his source.

Now back to the Great Seal. When you get the number of fingers on this pyramid, you find there are thirteen. And when you come to the bottom, there's an inscription in Roman numerals. It's, of course, 1776. Then, when you add six and seven and seven and six, you get twenty-one, which is the age of reason is it not? It was in 1776 that the thirteen states declared independence. The number thirteen is the number of that resurrection and rebirth. At the Last Supper there were twelve apostles and one Christ, who was going to die and be reborn. Thirteen is the number of getting out of the hold of the bounds of twelve, it's a resurrection. You have the two signs of the old and the new. These men were very conscious of the number thirteen, it's the number of resurrection and rebirth and new life, and they played it up here all the way through.

MOYERS: But as a practical matter, there were thirteen states.

CAMPBELL: Yes, but wasn't that symbolic? This is not simply coincidental. This is the thirteen states as themselves symbols of what they were.

MOYERS: That would explain the other inscription down there: "Novus Ordo Seclorum."

CAMPBELL: "A new order of the world." This is a new order of the world. And the saying above, "Annuit Coepas," means "He has smiled on our accomplishments" or "our activities."

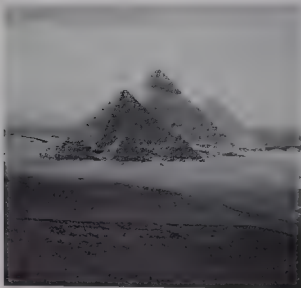
MOYERS: He—

CAMPBELL: He, the eye, what is represented by the eye, heaven. In Latin you wouldn't have to say "he" because it's "eye" and "he." But the divine power has smiled on our doings. And so this new world has been built in the sense of God's original creation, and the reflection of God's original creation, through reason, has brought this about.

If you look behind that pyramid, you see a desert. If you look before it, you see plants growing. The desert, the time in Europe, wars and wars and wars—we have pulled ourselves out of it and created a state in the name of reason, not in the name of power, and out of that will come the flowering of the new life. That's the sense of that part of the pyramid.

Pyramids at Giza.

In Egypt, the pyramid represents the primordial hillcock. After the annual flood of the Nile begins to sink down, the first hillcock is symbolic of the reborn world. That's what the Great Seal represents.



Now look at the right side of the double bird. Here's the eagle, the bird of Zeus. The eagle is the downy wing of the god in the new storm. The bird is the incarnation principle of the deity. This is the hawk eagle, the American eagle. This is the American counterpart of the eagle of the highest god, Zeus.

He comes down, descending into the world of the pairs of opposites, the field of action. One male of each is war and the other is peace. So on one of his feet the eagle has thirteen arrows—that's the principle of war. In the other he has a laurel wreath with thirteen leaves—that's the principle of peaceful conversation. The eagle is looking in the direction of the sun. That is why these ideologists who landed our country would wish us to be looking at power relationships and so forth. But thank the gods we got the arrows in the other foot, in case this doesn't work.

Now, what does the eagle represent? He represents what is indicated in the radiant sign above his head. I was listening once at the Foreign Service Institute in Washington to Hind mythologs, sociology, and politics. There's a saying in the Hindu book of politics that the ruler must hold in one hand the weapon of war, the bigaśaka, and in the other the peaceful sound of the song of a peacock. And there I was standing with my two hands like this, and everybody in the room laughed. I couldn't understand. And then they began pointing. I looked back, and there was this picture of the eagle hanging in the wall, behind my head, in just the same posture that I was in. But when I looked again, I noticed this sign above his head, and that there were no feathers in his tail. Nine is the number of the descent of the divine power into the world. When the Angeris rings, it rings nine times.

Now, over on the eagle's head are thirteen stars arranged in the form of a Star of David.

MOYERS: This used to be Solomon's Seal.

CAMPBELL: Yes. Do you know why it's called Solomon's Seal?

MOYERS: No.

CAMPBELL: Solomon used to seal his letters and grants and things into jars. You remember, in the Arabian Nights when they'd open the jar and out would come the genie. I noticed the Solomon's Seal here, composed of thirteen stars, and then I saw that each of the triangles was a Pythagorean tetracyc.

MOYERS: The tetracyc being...

CAMPBELL: This is a triangle composed of ten points, one point in the middle and four points on each side, adding up to nine, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. This is the primary symbol of Pythagorean philosophy, susceptible of a number of interrelated mythological, cosmological, psychological, and sociological interpretations, one of which is the dove at the apex as representing the creative center out of which the universe and all things have come.

MOYERS: The center of energy, then?

CAMPBELL: Yes. The initial sound the Christian might say, the creative Word, out of which the whole world was pre-created: the big bang, the



Drawing of eagle on seal
on dollar bill.

The eagle is looking in the direction of the laurel. That is the way these ideologists who founded our country would wish us to be looking—diplomatic relationships. But thank God he's got the arrows in the other foot.



Drawing of Solomon's
seal.

In the Great Seal of the United States, there are two of these interlocking triangles. We have thirteen points, for our original thirteen states, and ten apexes: one above, one below, and four to the four quarters. The sense of this might be that from above or below, or from any point of the compass, the creative word may be heard, which is the great theme of democracy.

pointing at the transcendental character and expanding through the field of time. As soon as it enters the field of time, it means it points it towards the timelessness itself. Now, when you have two, there must be a way in which they can relate to each other in two ways: this one dominating over that in other ways, or from both inter-variables and equilibria's of two, two-balanced second. It is very strange, for these three members of relations are that, it is as within the inner dimensions of some divine

I have not a word to add to the above, which states that all of the
 T. cont. are the same, but I have not a word to add to the above, which
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 states that the T. cont. are the same, but I have not a word to add to the above, which

So what I suddenly realized when I recognized that in the Great Seal of the United States there were two of these symbols, that these antebellum symbols that we now have three points to it, that there were original states and that there were two further ones, no less than two spokes in the wheel, was now, and I am going to talk about our careers. The second one, I see, is to be, might be that the issue is between a fruit and a point, that is, across the creative Word might be heard, with it, the great thing of democracy, democracy issues that it is only from the water can speak and speak that, because his name is not a fruit, the earth. All he has to do is clear out his reasons and then speak.

So what you have here on the diagram is the circle representing the world, the image of the world in which the transcendental interests reside. Thus, what the circle of Socrates contained is the transcendental world properly, you could say, in contrast to the empirical world, in the sense of the world *out* at the rim.

Newspaper articles about the case were extensive. We did not, however, read any of them. We were able to interview several people involved in the case, but not all of them. So, we cannot say that the data are complete.

[illegible]

by these mythological symbols?

[illegible]

MOYERS The way of—

LEMMA 1. If \mathcal{A} is a set of n attributes, then there exists a set of n functions f_1, \dots, f_n from \mathcal{A} to $\mathcal{P}(\mathcal{A})$ such that $f_i(A_j) = A_j$ if and only if $i = j$. \square

MOYERS: That's why our founders opposed religious intolerance.

CAMPBELL: That was out entirely. And that's why they rejected the idea of the Fall, too. All men are competent to know the moral good. There is no revelation special to any people.

MOYERS: I can see how, in your years of scholarship and deep immersion in these mythological systems, you would read the Great Seal that way. But wouldn't it have been surprising to most of those men who were designing the seal to discover these mythological implications behind their effort to build a new country?

CAMPBELL: Well, why did they use them?

MOYERS: Aren't a lot of these Masonic symbols?

CAMPBELL: They are Masonic signs, and the meaning of the Pythagorean tetrads has been known for centuries. The information would have been found in Thomas Jefferson's library. These were a natural camouflage. The eighteenth-century Enlightenment was a world of learned gentlemen. We haven't had men of that quality in politics very much. It's in enormous good fortune for our state that that cluster of gentlemen had the power and were in a position to influence events at that time.

MOYERS: What explains the relationship between these symbols and the Masons, and the fact that so many of these founding fathers belonged to the Masonic order? Is the Masonic order an expression or melange of mythological thinking?

CAMPBELL: Yes, I think it is. This is a scholarly attempt to reconstruct an order of initiation that would result in spiritual revelation. These founding fathers who were Masons actually studied what they called "Hittite Egyptian" art. In Egypt, the pyramid represents the primordial chaos. After the annual flooding of the Nile begins to subside, the first block is symbolic of the reborn world. That's what this seal represents.

MOYERS: You sometimes call the myth the sleeping contradiction at the heart of our civilization system, the thing we praise these men who were inspirers and creators of the Age of Reason, and on the other hand you salute Luke Skywalker in Star Wars for the moment when he says "I'm off the computer and to the stars, feelings." How do you reconcile the role of science, which is reason with the role of myth, which is imagination?

CAMPBELL: No, no, you have to distinguish between reason and thinking.

MOYERS: Disturbish between reason and thinking? I think you're not reasoning things out?

CAMPBELL: Yes, your reason is much more thinking. But thinking is going out, isn't it? Logical reasoning in this sense. Figuring out how you can break through a wall by logical reason. I can use what I know, but after it bumps its nose here, that perhaps we can get around there, is that the scientific method? We figure things out. But that's not reason. Reason is not a way and not a knowledge and the fundamental step of being a member of the universe.

CAMPBELL: We can't have a mythology for a long, long time. The things are changing too fast to become mythologized.

MOYERS: How do we live without myths then?

CAMPBELL: The individual has to find an aspect of myth that relates to his own life. Myth basically serves three functions. The first is the mystical function—that's the one I've been speaking about—realizing what it is to wonder the universe, and what a wonder you are, and experiencing awe in one of these mysteries. Myth opens the world to the dimension of mystery, to the realization of the mystery that underlies all forms. It says, I see that you don't have a mythology. If mystery is manifest through all things, the universe becomes, as it were, a big picture. You are a way of addressing the transcendent mystery through the conditions of your actual world.

The second is a cosmological dimension, the dimension with which science is concerned—showing you what the shape of the universe is, but showing it in such a way that the mystery again comes through. Today we tend to think that scientists have all the answers. But the great ones tell us, No, we haven't got all the answers. We're telling you how it works, but what is it? You strike a match, what's fire? You can tell me about oxidation, but that doesn't tell me a thing.

The third function is the sociological one—supporting and validating a certain social order. And here we learn the myths vary enormously from place to place. You can have a whole mythology for polygamy, a whole mythology for monogamy. Either one's okay. It depends on where you are. It is this sociological function of myth that has taken over in our world—more so at our date.

MOYERS: What do you mean?

CAMPBELL: Ethical laws. The laws of life as it should be in the good society. All of it, both the pages and pages of what kind of clothes to wear, how to behave to each other, and so forth, in the first millennium B.C.

But there is a fourth function of myth, and this is the one that I think everyone must try today to relate to—and that is the pedagogical function, of how to live a human life under any circumstances. Myths can teach you that.

MOYERS: So the old story, so long known and transmitted through the generations, isn't functioning, and we have not yet created a new one?

CAMPBELL: The story that we have in the West, so far as it is based on the Bible, is based on a view of the universe that belongs to the first millennium B.C. It does not relate to our concept either of the universe or of the dignity of man. It belongs entirely somewhere else.

We have today to learn to get back into accord with the wisdom of nature and realize again our brotherhood with the animals and with the water and the sea. It says that the divinity informs the world and all things is condemned as pantheism. But pantheism is a misleading word. It suggests that a personal god is supposed to inhabit the world, but that is not the deity at all. The deity is trans-theological. It's not an undeniably noticeable mystery, thought of as a power that is the source and end and supporting ground of all life and being.



Earth seen from space.

When you are the earth from the moon, you don't see any divisions here of nations or states.
The night be the symbol for the new beginnings of time. That's our country that we are going
to be celebrating. And that's the people that we are with.

and that beneath we read a message: *letter in, sign, this offer expresses the moral, really, of our whole discussion.*

The President in Washington said word for the law does not buy or find. But how can you buy or sell the sky? The wind? The water? Strange to us. If we do not own the business of the earth, the spark of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every new-morning mountain, is the life of the people, the experience of my people.

We know the spirit of a forest more with the trees as we know the human heart through our words. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters. The bear, the deer, the eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the lakes, the meadow, the mossy heart of the pony, and man, all belong to the same family.

This is the water that flows in the streams, the rivers, and the great water, but the look of that river, the way we see it, our mind, you must remember that it is sacred. Each ghost's reflection in the clear waters of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The waters in that still the voice of my father's father.

"The rivers are our brothers. I will speak for them. They carry our voices, our blood, our children. So you must give to the rivers the kindness you would give any brother."

If we see a river, and I remember how the trees speak to us, that the world is spirit, within the life it supports. The world that gave our grandfather his first breath, so receives his last sigh. The wind speaks to our children the spirit of the land. So if we see you and me, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where men can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow flowers.

We say to each other, children, at night we have taught our children: "That the earth is our mother." What belongs to the earth belongs to the sons of the earth.

This we know, the earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. All things are connected. Like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

One thing we know, our God is one and our God. The earth is precious to him and he will not let the earth be soiled by contempt for its creation.

Your destiny is a mystery to us. What will happen when the bottoms are all submerged? The wind rises again. What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are revealed with the secret of many men and the view of the ripe fields is obscured by rising waters? Where will the duck be? Where? Where will the eagle be? Where? And what is the song of goodbye to the swift pony and the bear? The land is crying in the becoming of sorrow.

"When the Last Red Man has vanished with his wilderness and his memory is only the sad word of the old fire song across the prairie with these stones and forests to be left." We shall be only the spirit of my people left.

We love this earth, its new sun, its mother's laughter. So if we see you and me, we must be careful of it, we must be careful of it as we have cared for

it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you receive it. Preserve the land for all children and love it, as God loves it, as all.

As we are part of the land, you too are part of the land. This land is precious to us. It is as so precious to you. One thing we know there is only one God. No man, be he Red Man or White Man, can be apart. We are brothers after all."

MYTHAN, THE
MR. CLARK OF IL.



Totem poles in front of the house of a *chet*, Alert Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia

III

THE JOURNEY INWARD

One thing that comes out in myths is that at the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light.



Mythos: Someone asked me, "Why are you drawn to these myths? What do you see in what Joseph Campbell is saying?" And I answered, "These myths speak to me because they express what I know inside is true." Why is this so? Why does it seem that these stories tell me what I know inside is true? Does it come from the grandeur of my being, the unconscious that I have inherited from all that has come before me?

Joseph: That's right. You've got the same body with the same organs and energies, that was Magna man and thirty thousand years ago. Living a human life in New York City or living a human life in the caves, you go through the same stages of childhood, coming to sexual maturity, transformation of the unconscious of childhood into the responsibilities of adulthood. A woman had a marriage, took a line of the body, grad a lot of experiences, and death. You have the same body, the same body experiences, and so you respond to the same images. For example, a constant image is that of a conflict between an eagle and a serpent. The serpent bound to the earth, the eagle in spiritual flight. So that conflict sometimes we see experience. And then, when the two are joined, we get a wonderful image, a serpent with wings. A serpent the earth people recognize these images. Whether I'm

reading Babylonian or Iranian or Egyptian myths, the images are the same and they are talking about the same problems.

M. MYERS: They just wear different costumes when they appear at different times?

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CAMPBELL: Yes. It's as though the same play were taken from one place to another, and at each place the local players put on local costumes and enact the same old play.

M. MYERS: And these mythic images are carried forward from generation to generation, almost unconsciously.

CAMPBELL: That's utterly fascinating, because they are speaking about the deep mystery of yourself and everything else. It's a mysterious mystery, tremendous and jaw-droppingly terrible, because it smashes all of your fixed notions of things, and at the same time, utterly fascinating, because it's



Egyptian stele showing harpist invoking Horus.

Whether I'm reading *Heremias* or *Protagon* or Egyptian myths, the images are the same, and they are talking about the same problems.

of your own nature and being. When you start thinking about these things about the inner mystery, inner life, the eternal life, there aren't too many images for you to use. You begin in your own life to have the images that are already present in some other system of thought.

MOYERS: There was a sense during medieval times of teaching the world as if the world had messages for you.

CAMPBELL: Oh, it certainly does. The myths help you read the messages. They tell you the typical probabilities.

MOYERS: Give me an example.

CAMPBELL: One thing that comes out in myths, for example, is that at the bottom of the abyss comes the white illumination. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light.

MOYERS: Like Rostok's poem, "In a Dark Time, the Eye Begins to See." You're saying that myths have brought this consciousness to you.

CAMPBELL: I live with these myths, and they tell me this all the time. This is the problem that can be metaphorically understood as dealing with the Christ in you. The Christ in you doesn't die. The Christ in you survives death and resurrects. Or you can identify that with Shiva. I am Shiva; this is the great meditation of the yogis in the Himalayas.

MOYERS: And heaven, that desired goal of most people, is within us.

CAMPBELL: Heaven and hell are within us, and all the gods are within us. This is the great realization of the Upanishads in India in the fifth century B.C. All the gods, all the heavens, all the worlds, are within us. They are imagined dreams, and dreams are manifestations in image form of the energies of the body in contact with each other. That's what myths is. Myth is a manifestation in symbolic images, in metaphorical images, of the energies of the organs of the body in contact with each other. This organ wants this, that organ wants that. The brain is one of the organs.

MOYERS: So when we dream, we are dealing in some vast ocean of mythology that

CAMPBELL: that goes down and down and down. You can get all mixed up with complexes, you know, things like that, but really, as the Polynesian saying goes, you are then standing in a white hot magma of manna. We are standing in a whale. The ground of being is the ground of our being, and when we simply turn outward, we see all of these little problems here and there. But, if we look inward, we see that we are the source of them all.

MOYERS: You talk about mythology existing here and now, where are we? What is dreamtime?

CAMPBELL: This is the time you get into when you go to sleep and have a dream that talks about permanent conditions with your own power as they relate to the temporal conditions of your life right now.

MOYERS: Explain that.

CAMPBELL: For example, you may be worried that if you start ~~in~~ going to pass on your ~~in~~. Then you're at a dream, "I'm not doing that, and you know that ~~in~~ are with ~~in~~ associated with ~~in~~ that ~~in~~ are in ~~in~~ track. They are ~~in~~ paid ~~in~~ together that ~~in~~ says even that ~~in~~ it's ~~in~~ expounded dream is not ~~in~~ it's ~~in~~ exalted. The dream is an inexhaustible source of spiritual information about yourself.

Now the level of dream is ~~in~~ And I put the example of ~~in~~ and I say this girl's ~~in~~ that is ~~in~~ personal. But ~~in~~ are ~~in~~ are ~~in~~ the problem of passing on even is not simply a personal problem. Everyone has to pass through it of some kind. There is an archetypal theme. So there is a basic mythological theme there even though it's a personal dream. These two levels—the personal aspect and even the basic general problem of whether the personal problem is a ~~in~~ example—~~in~~ and in all contexts ~~in~~ example, everyone has the problem of facing death. This is a standard motif.

MOYERS: What do we learn from our dreams?

CAMPBELL: You learn about yourself.

MOYERS: How do we pay attention to our dreams?

CAMPBELL: All you have to do is to narrate your dream as the best place, and write it down. Then take on the first part of the dream, one or two images or motifs, and assign a myth to it. Write down what comes to your mind, and repeat what comes to your mind, and again, for a third time. The dream is based on a body of experience that have some kind of significance to your life, and that you don't know were informing you. So in the next dream will come some ~~in~~ and your interpretation will go further.

MOYERS: A man once told me that he didn't remember dreaming until he retired. Suddenly, having no place to go, he began to dream, he began to dream and dream and dream. As you think that we tend to ~~in~~ the significance of dreaming in our modern society?

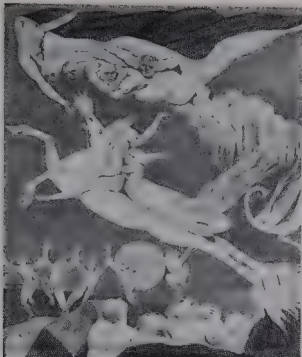
CAMPBELL: Ever since Freud's interpretation of *Die Traumdeutung* was published, there has been a recognition of the importance of dreams. But even before that there were dream interpretations. People had superstitions, notions about dreams. For example, "Something is going to happen because I dreamed it is going to happen."

MOYERS: Why is a myth different from a dream?

CAMPBELL: Oh, because a dream is a personal experience, it's that deep, dark ground that is the support of our consciousness, and a myth is the society's dream. The myth is the public dream and the dream is the private myth. If your private myth, your dream, happens to coincide with that of the society, you're in good accord with your group. If it isn't, you're on an adventure in the dark forest ahead of you.

MOYERS: So if my private dream is in accord with the public myth, my life is more taken to the health of the society. But if my private dream is out of step with the public—

CAMPBELL: You'll be in trouble. If you're forced to live in that system, you'll be a neurotic.



"O! how I dreamt of
things impossible,"
William Blake
(1757–1827).

*The myth is the public
dream, and the dream is the
private myth*

MOYERS: But aren't many visionaries and even leaders and heroes close to the edge of neuroticism?

CAMPBELL: Yes, they are.

MOYERS: How do you explain that?

CAMPBELL: They've moved out of the society that would have protected them, and into the dark forest—into the world of the original experience. Original experience has not been interpreted for you—and so you've got to work out your life for yourself. Either you can take it as you can't. You don't have to go far off the interpreted path to find yourself in very difficult situations. The courage to face the trials and to bring a whole new body of possibilities into the field of interpreted experience for other people to experience—that is the hero's deed.

MOYERS: You say dreams come up from the psyche.

AMERICK: I don't know where else they come from. They come from the imagination, don't they? The imagination is grounded in the structure of the organs of the body, and these are the same for all human beings. Since imagination comes out of one biological ground, it is bound to produce certain themes. Dreams are dreams. There are certain characteristics of dreams that can be identified, no matter who's dreaming them.

MURKIN: I thought a dream was something very private, while myth is something very public.

SAMUELSON: On some levels, a private dream runs into truly mythic themes and can't be interpreted except by analogy with myth. Jung speaks of two orders of dream: the personal dream and the archetypal dream, or the dream of mythological wisdom. You can interpret a personal dream by association, figuring out what it is telling about its own owner's life or in relation to your own personal problems. But every now and then a dream comes up that is pure myth, that carries a mythic theme, or that is simply, for example, to come from the Christ within.

MURKIN: From the archetypal person within us, the archetypes, so we are

SAMUELSON: That's right. Now there's another deeper meaning of dreamtime, which is at a time that's more constant and enduring than I being. There's an important myth that Indians tell to tell this world of logical age and its termination at the beginning, according to this story, the ancestors were not distinguished by sex. There were no birth and there were no deaths. Then a great public dance was celebrated, and in the course of the dance one of the participants was transformed into a deity and born to pieces, and the pieces were buried. At the moment of that kind of dissection, the pieces became separated, so that death was now balanced by becoming, becoming by death, where from the buried parts of the dismembered body new plants grew. Time and come out, being death, birth, and that kind of becoming of other living beings for the preservation of life. The timelessness of the beginning had been terminated by a communal crime, a dismembering, murder or sacrifice.

Now, one of the main problems of mythology, since we live in the world of this brutal precondition, all of which lives by tricking and eating of lives. You don't kill yourself by eating only vegetables, either. But these two are close. So the essence of life is this eating itself. The lives of lives, and the reconstruction of the community and sensibility to get that kind of fatal fact is one—the functions of some of those very brutal myths in which the ritual consists of eating and killing. In addition, as I wrote of the first primordial crime, out of which those customs were born, what would participate. The reconstruction of murder, the conditions of the story, myth, ritual, creation stories. They're very one each other in this respect.

MURKIN: I believe it is this. I believe I believe that you're talking about other stones?

SAMUELSON: We're talking to MURKIN, and I'm talking about other stories in other cultures, and we'll see.

MURKIN: OK, OK. I believe that God created the heavens and the

earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

CAMPBELL: This is from "The Song of the Weyward," a legend of the Pima Indians of Arizona. "In the beginning there was only darkness over, where darkness and water. And the darkness gathered thick in places, crowding together and then separating, crowding and separating."

THE EARTHLY
DESIRE

43



*Garden of Earthly
Delights, Hieronymus
Bosch (ca. 1490-
1516)*

So God created man in his
own image, in the image of
and he created him, male
and female he created
them.

MOYERS: Genesis 1. And the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light" and there was light.

CAMPBELL: And this is from the Hindu Upanishads, from about the eighth century B.C. "In the beginning, there was only the great self reflected in the form of a person. Reflecting, it found nothing but itself. Then its first word was, 'This am I.'"

MOYERS: Genesis 1. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply.'"

CAMPBELL: Now, this is from a legend of the Bassari people of West Africa. Unumbotte made a human being. Its name was Man. Unumbotte next made an antelope, named Antelope. Urumbotte made a snake, named Snake. And Unumbotte said to them, "The earth has not yet been pounded. You must pound the ground smooth where you are sitting." Unumbotte gave them seeds and tools and said, "Crop these."

MOYERS: Genesis 2. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done."

CAMPBELL: And now again from the Pima Indians: "I make the world and lo, the world is finished. Thus I make the world, and lo, the world is finished."



Gold and ivory plaque,
720 B.C., Baghdad
Museum.

*Life leads by leading and
ending itself, ending its
death and being others.*

MOYERS And Genesis . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

CAMPBELL And from the beginning. Then he realized I think I am this creature, but I have poured it out from myself. In that way I became this creature. Well, he who creates this creature is this creature's creator."

That is the clincher there. What you know this, then you are identified with the creative principle, which is the God power in the world, which means in you. It is beautiful.

MOYERS But Genesis continues: "Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said: "The woman whom you gave me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said: "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate."

You talk about buck passing, it starts very early.

CAMPBELL Yes, it has been tough on serpents. The Russian legend continues in the same way. "One day Snake said: 'We too should eat these fruits. Why must we go hungry?' Another said: 'But we don't know anything about this fruit.' Then Man and his wife took some of the fruit and ate it. Unamthor came down from the sky and asked: 'Who ate the fruit?' They answered: 'We did.' Unamthor asked: 'Who told you that you could eat that fruit?' They replied: 'Snake did.' It is very much the same story.

MOYERS What do you make of it, that in these two stories the principal actors point to someone else as the initiator of the Fall?

CAMPBELL Yes, but it turns out to be the snake. It begins these stories the snake is the symbol of the throwback of the past and continues to be.

MOYERS Why?

CAMPBELL The power of the causes the snake to shed its skin, just as the moon sheds its shadow. The serpent sheds its skin to be born again, as the moon is shadowed to be born again. They are equivalent symbols. Sometimes the serpent is represented as a circle eating its own tail. That's an image of the life studying the generation after in order to be something. The serpent represents immortal energy and consciousness in the field of time, constantly changing its skin and being born again. There's something tremendous about it, about the way it sheds its old skin. And so the serpent carries in itself the sense of the transcendence, the terror of life.

Furthermore, the serpent represents the primary function of man's eating. Life consists in eating other creatures. You don't talk about that very much when you make a nice dinner. But what would you be eating something that was recently alive. And when you look at a picture of nature, and you see the birds picking at and devouring things. You see the cows grazing, they're eating things. The serpent is a traveling alimentary canal, that's about it all. And it gives you that primary sense of shock that it is its most primary quality. There's something with that animal at all. Life lives by killing and eating the dead, casting its death and being reborn like the moon. This is one of the mysteries that these symbolic, paradoxical forms try to represent.



A. *Eve Tempted by the Serpent*, Lucas Cranach, ca. 1530.
B. *Sulême*, Gustav Klimt (1862–1918)

This identification of the woman with one of the serpents with an animal that is both snake and lion was first has been given in the creation story in the Bible, a myth and doctrine of the Fall.



Now the snake in most cultures is given a positive interpretation. In India, even the most poisonous snake, the cobra, is a sacred animal. In the mythological Serpent King is the next thing to the Buddha. The serpent represents the power of life engaged in the field of time and of death yet eternally alive. The work is but its shadow, the being is king.

The serpent was revered in the American Indian traditions, too. The serpent was thought of as a very important power to be in close touch with. Go down to the pueblos, for example, and watch the snake dance of the Hopi, where they take the snakes in their mouths and in the tracks with them and then send them back to the hills. The snakes are sent back to carry the human message to the hills, just as they have brought the message of the hills to the humans. The intermediary in and between is stressed in this regard, as up with the serpent. A serpent flows like water and seems watery, but is unique, contrary to it, since it does not. So you have the pair of opposites together in the serpent.

MOYERS: In the Christian story the serpent is the seducer.

AMERLEE: That American is a refusal to continue. In the biblical tradition we have inherited, we've corrupt and every natural impulse is sinful unless it has been circumcised or baptised. The serpent was the one who brought sin into the world. And the woman was the one who needed the apple to sin. This identification of the woman with sin—the serpent with sin—and thus of life with sin is the twist that has been given to the whole story in the biblical myth and doctrine of the fall.

MOYERS: Does the idea of woman as sinner appear in other mythologies?

AMERLEE: No, I don't know of it elsewhere. The closest thing to it would be perhaps in India, with the goddess Kali, but that's not in that sort of trouble. The idea in the biblical tradition of the fall is that nature is wicked, we know it, we corrupt sex in it, it is corrupt, and the female is the epitome of sex is a corrupter. Why was the knowledge of good and evil introduced to Adam and Eve? We know that knowledge would be a blessing if it were still in Eden, without our participation in it. Woman brings it out of the way. Eve is the mother of our temporal world, basically a hell, a tormenting paradise there in the Garden of Eden, no time, no birth, no death, no age. The serpent who does and does not shed his skin and renews it, is like us, the lord of the central tree, where time and eternity come together, he is the primary god actually in the Garden of Eden. You're the one who works there in the case of the evening is just a visitor. The Garden is the serpent's place. It's an old, old story. We have Semitic stories from as early as 3200 B.C. showing the serpent and the tree and the goddess, with the goddess giving the fruit of the tree to a young man. The serpent, the lady of the goddess is right there.

Now, I saw a fantastic thing in a movie years and years ago, of a Buddhist snake priestess who had to bring into her temple a snake as a mount in part to link it to the great man in his life and at the same time to direct it to the nose. There was the serpent the giver of life, the giver of rain, as a divine positive figure, not a negative one.

MOYERS: But how does it express the difference between that image and the image of the snake in Genesis?

existence. There is certainly a positive expression of the love of nature in Hebrews and, to a lesser extent, in the pagan poets. The principal limit of the paganistic movement is the goddess and associated with the goddess is the serpent. This is the source of the mystery in the. The movement started deep reached that, that means there is a natural reaction of the Mosaic goddess - paid - the serpent of the Garden of Eden.

Myth 4: It has been said that most of the blame for the 2008 financial crisis can be cast on banks, especially for the subprime market. Why are banks being held responsible for the downfall?

and suffering with pain, but is a suffering which is not a part of existence and suffering.

What is the meaning?

And the first started with a sex, a male, mother words, a mother and the methodology in the first course of the garden. For first, where there is a male, and where there are women, don't even know that they are different in a real way. The two are positions, and so they are practically the same. And works in the sex, the existing in a sex, where they are. And then they are the pure, the knowledge of the opposite. And when they see they are different, a man and a woman, a very first time. You see they are different, and the sexes are sexes. Male and female were opposites. Another opposite is the man and the woman. And Gnosticism is a matter of opposites. The primary opposites are the sexes and that between the sexes are Gns. That creates the dual, a good or evil, in the world. And when it had been through the sexes out of the garden — I mean, Gns was right there — so by that time, recognizing duality, I mean, in the world, you know, two in the many, many of opposites.

There's a Hindu image that shows a man walking to the Mount of Golgotha and holding a crucifix in his hand, which shows the crucifix from the transverse or vertical field of time. And when from this transverse there comes a perspective, it becomes a crucifix of time, as two. And these in the field of time are pairs of opposites. So this strange shift of consciousness from the consciousness of duality to the consciousness of participation in duality. And then you are into the field of time.

Was it in the story, though, that as people were destroyed, this Garden to destroy us, there was a unity of life?

AMPLITUDE: five different phases of disease progress. Progression from 1 to 5 with nothing in between. There is the phase of disease progress where you identify yourself with it, and with the disease, not the person.

MOYERS, Which is?

ANALYTICAL EXPRESSIONS FOR THE THERMAL STABILITY OF POLYIMIDES

MOYER & GARDY

 $\Delta \text{MFI} = (\text{MFI}_{\text{treated}} - \text{MFI}_{\text{control}}) / \text{MFI}_{\text{control}}$, where MFI stands for mean fluorescence intensity.

appears to refer to something that is known. But the transcendence is unknown and unknown and is transcendent from anything at the time. God/God is beyond names and forms. Meister Eckhart said of the ultimate and highest knowledge is having God for God, having a relation of God for an experience of that which is transcendent of notions.

The mystery of it is beyond all human conception. Everything we know is within the terminology of the concepts of being and not being, male and female, true and false. We always think in terms of opposites. Beyond the ultimate, is beyond the pairs of opposites that you think are it.

MOYERS: Why do we think in terms of opposites?

CAMPBELL: Because we can't think otherwise.

MOYERS: That's the nature of reality in our time.

CAMPBELL: That's the nature of our experience of reality.

MOYERS: Man-woman, life-death, good-evil.

CAMPBELL: I and you—this and that, true and untrue—every one of them has its opposite. But mythology suggests that behind that duality there is a singularity over which this passes as a symbolic game. "Eternity is above with the productions of time," says the poet Blake.

MOYERS: What does that mean? Eternity is in love with the productions of time?

CAMPBELL: The source of temporal life is eternity. Eternity pours itself into the world. It is a basic mythic idea of the god who becomes incarnate. In India, the god who lives in me is called the "inhabitant of the body." Identically with that divine, immortal aspect of yourself is to identify yourself with divinity.

Now, eternity is beyond all categories of thought. This is an important point in a lot of the great Oriental religions. We want to think about God. God is a thought. God is a name. God is a noun. But its reference is to something that transcends all thinking. The ultimate mystery of being is beyond all categories of thought. As Kant said, one thing in itself is nothing. It transcends thought, it goes past anything that could be thought. The best things can't be told because they transcend thought. The second best are in understandable, because those are the thoughts that are supposed to refer to what can't be thought about. The third best are what we talk about. And myth is that behind reference to what is absolutely transcendent.

MOYERS: What can't be known or named except in our feeble attempt to clothe it in language.

CAMPBELL: The ultimate word in our English language that which is transcendent is God. But then you have a concept, don't you see? You think of God as the Father. Now, in relation where the god or creator is the mother, the whole world is her body. There is nowhere else. The mother is usually somewhere else. But male and female are two aspects of one principle. The division of life into sexes was a weird custom. Bringing forth the masculine male and female. The early ones are just as he. They divide and become two by sexual reproduction. I don't know at what level sexual activity comes in, but it's late. That's why it's absurd to speak of God as of

either this sex or that sex. The divine power is antecedent to sexual separation.

MOYERS: But isn't the only way a human being can try to grapple with this immense idea to assign it a language that he or she understands? God, he, God, she—

CAMPBELL: Yes, but you don't understand it if you think it is a he or a she. The he or a she is a springboard to spring you into the transcendent, and transcendent means to transcend—to go past duality. Everything in the realm of time and space is dual. The incarnation appears either as male or as female, and each of us is the incarnation of God. You're born in only one aspect of your actual metaphysical duality, you might say. This is represented in the mystery religions, where an individual goes through a series of initiations opening him out into the infinite to deeper and deeper depths of himself, and there comes a moment when he realizes that he is both mortal and immortal, both male and female.

MOYERS: Do you think there was such a place as the Garden of Eden?

CAMPBELL: Of course not. The Garden of Eden is a metaphor for that innocence that is innocent of time, innocent of opposites, and that is the prime center out of which consciousness then becomes aware of the changes.

MOYERS: But if there is in the ideal of Eden this innocence, what happens to it? Isn't it shaken, dominated, and corrupted by fear?

CAMPBELL: That's it. There is a wonderful story of the deity, of the Self that said, "I am." As soon as it said "I am," it was afraid.

MOYERS: Why?

CAMPBELL: It was an entity now, in time. Then it thought, "What should I be afraid of, I'm the only thing that is." And as soon as it said that,

Paradise, Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Jan Bruegel the Elder (1568–1625).

The Garden of Eden is a metaphor for that innocence that is innocent of time, innocent of opposites, and that is the prime center out of which consciousness then becomes aware of the changes.



it felt oneness, and wished that there were another, and so it felt desire, it swelled, split in two, became male and female, and bore the world.

Fear is the first experience—the terror at the womb. There is a record, a Slavonian psychiatrist, Strossay, told me, a very intelligent man, who for years treated people with LSD. And he told that some of them re-experienced with him, in the re-experiencing, the first stage is that of the fetus in the womb without any sense of life or of being. Then slowly before birth the rhythm of the uterus begins and there's terror. Fear is the first thing—the thing that says, "I." Then comes the horrible stage of getting to birth, the difficult passage through the birth canal, and when my good night's on you image, isn't it amazing that this process, so what the myth says, that Selt said, "I am," and comes into being? And then when it reached it was a one—it felt desire for another and became two. That is the breaking into the world of light and the pairs—opposites.

MOYERS: What does it say about why all of us have in common if so many of these stories contain similar elements—the "hidden part" the woman? For example, these myths of the creation stories, contain a "taboo" shattering. Men and woman rebel against that prohibition and go venture in their own. After years and years of reading these things, I am still overwhelmed at the similarities in cultures that are far, far apart.

AMBELE: There is a standard book, titled *The Old Forbidden Thing*, by Max Black, and who is to his credit, about speaking to the "user." And then one always finds, in the Old Testament, very good points out the one forbidden thing, how it did, we have known very well that man was going to eat the forbidden fruit, but it was by doing that that man became the inventor of his own world. The rebellion began with that act of disobedience.

MOYERS: How do you explain these similarities?

AMBELE: There are two explanations. One explanation is that the human psyche is essentially the same all over the world. The psyche is the inward experience of the human body, which is essentially the same in all human beings with the same organs, the same instincts, the same impulses, the same conflicts, the same fears. But if we common ground have come, we are largely made, the archetypes which are common to all cultures.

MOYERS: What are archetypes?

AMBELE: They are certain ideas, archetypes, the ideas, ground ideas. These ideas are spokes of a wheel, they are the archetypes. "Archetype" is the better term, but use "archetype" ideas is always by myth. Archetype of the unconscious, as it is, it comes from below. The difference between the Jungian archetypes and the Freudian and Freud's complexes is that the archetypes, the unconscious, are manifestations of the repressed the mind and their powers. Archetypes are biologically grounded, whereas the Freudian unconscious is a collection of repressed infantile experiences from the individuals that is. The Freudian unconscious is a personal unconscious, a biographical. The Jungian archetypes of the unconscious are biological. The biographical is secondary to that.

All over the world, and at different times of human history, these archetypes or collective ideas have appeared and existed. The

**Creation, Michelangelo,
Sistine Chapel, Rome
1508-12.**

What we are looking for in these creation stories is a way of experiencing the world that will open to us the transcendent that informs it, and at the same time forms ourselves within it. That is what people want. That is what the soul seeks for.



differences in the costumes are the results of environment and historical conditions. It is these differences that the anthropologist is most concerned to identify and compare.

Now there is also a countertheory of diffusion to account for the similarity of myths. For instance, the art of riding the wild-gryff is not the area in which it was first developed, and although it gives a mythology that has to do with fertilizing the earth with planting and bringing up the food plants, some such myth as that just described is lacking in deriving, existing, or planting its members, and having the wild-gryffs grow. Such a myth will accompany an agricultural or planting tradition. But you won't find it in a hunting culture. So there are historical as well as psychological aspects of this problem of the similarity of myths.

MYEBS. Human beings subscribe to much more of these stories of creation. What do you think we are looking for when we subscribe to some of these myths?

CAMPBELL: I think what we are looking for is a way of experiencing the world that will open to us the transcendence that informs it, and at the same time forms ourselves within it. That's what people want. That's what the soul asks for.

MOYERS: You mean we are looking for some accord with the mystery that informs all things, what you call that strange, glorious silence which we all share?

CAMPBELL: Yes, but not only to find it but to hold it, to enjoy it, to environment it in our world, to recognize it, to have some kind of instruction that will enable us to experience the divine presence.

MOYERS: In the world and in us.

CAMPBELL: In India there is a beautiful greeting, in which the palms are placed together, and you bow to the other person. Do you know what that means?

MOYERS: No.

CAMPBELL: The position of the palms together—thus we use when we pray—do we not? That is a greeting which says that the god that is in you recognizes the god in the other. These people are aware of the divine presence in all things. When you enter an Indian home as a guest, you are greeted as a visiting deity.

MOYERS: But weren't the people who told these stories who believed them and acted on them, asking simpler questions? Weren't they asking, for example, who made the world? How was the world made? Why was the world made? Aren't these the questions that these creation stories are trying to address?

CAMPBELL: No. It's the myth that answers that they see that the deity is present in the whole world. You see what I mean? This story from the Upanishads that we have just read: "I see that I am that's creation," says the god. When you see that God is the creation, and that you are a creature, you realize that God is within you, and in the nature of reality which you are talking as well. So there is the realization of two aspects of the oneness of reality. There is a basic mythological motif that reality is always becoming, then there was separation—heaven and earth, male and female, and so forth. How did we lose touch with this unity? One thing you can say is that the separation was somebody's fault. They are the wronging that of said the wrong words to God so that he got angry and ran away. So now the eternal is somehow away from us, and we have to find some way to get back in touch with it.

There is another theme in which man is thought of as having come not from above but from the womb of Mother Earth. Often in these stories there is a great older couple upon which people climb. The last people want to get out are two great big fat, heavy people. They eat the ripe and snap it breaks. So we are separated from the source. In a way, because of our minds, we actually are separated, and the problem is to realize that broken cord.

MOYERS: There are times when I think maybe primitive men and women were just telling these stories to entertain themselves.

the user and under certain conditions.

There are two main points. The first is that the stories do not have a single point or theme. The second is that they are not meant to be taken literally. They are allegorical.

groups?

[illegible]

In these stories, there are two characters and a third character is not seen. There are two brothers, so it is likely that there is a sister. Yet, remaining in the darkness of the story of chapter 2, and using the tradition of a sister, there is an initial guess that the third character is a sister, wife of the brother. If that is the case, there was a brother and a sister at Sumer. The gods were born because of the darkness, and the darkness was the first thing that they looked at when they were born. Thus, the beginning of the myth of chapters 2 and 3 in *Genesis*.

[illegible]

The study found that Arsenal players would only support the club if they put Arsenal first, even if it meant leaving their wife or kids. The composition of the sample was not ideal because Arsenal were the only team in the sample and the sample was not representative of the general population. The study was also flawed by the fact that the sample was not representative of the general population. The study was also flawed by the fact that the sample was not representative of the general population. The study was also flawed by the fact that the sample was not representative of the general population.

story. What is that one great story?

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man, estrations in the field of time. The field of time is a kind of stage we play over a timeless ground. And you play the game in the shadow field, you enact your side of the polarity with your imagination. But you know that your enemy, for example, is simply the other side of what you would see as yourself if you could see from the position of the middle.

MOYERS: So the one great story is the search to find our place in the drama?

CAMPBELL: To be in accord with the grand symphony that this world is, to put the harmony of the own body in accord with that harmony.

MOYERS: When I read these stories, no matter the culture or origin, I feel a sense of wonder at the spectacle of the human imagination groping to try to understand this existence, to invest in that small journey these transcendent possibilities. Has that ever happened to you?

CAMPBELL: I think of mythology as the homeland of the muses, the inspirers of art, the inspirers of poetry. To see life as a poem and yourself participating in a poem is what the myth does for you.

MOYERS: A poem?

CAMPBELL: I mean a vocabulary in the form of words but of acts and adventures which connotes something transcendent of the action here, so that you always feel in accord with the universal being.

MOYERS: When I read these myths, I am simply in awe of the mystery, as it is. We can presume, but we cannot penetrate.

CAMPBELL: That is the point. The person who thinks he has it and the ultimate truth is wrong. There is an often-quoted verse in Sanskrit, which appears in the Chinese *I Ching* as well. He who thinks he knows doesn't know. He who knows that he doesn't know knows. For in this context, to know is not to know. And not to know is to know.

MOYERS: For years undermining my faith, your work in mythology has liberated my faith from the cultural prisons to which it has been sentenced.

CAMPBELL: It liberated my own, and I know it is going to do that with anyone who gets the message.

MOYERS: Are some myths more or less true than others?

CAMPBELL: They are true in different senses. Every mythology tries to do with the wisdom of the as related by a specific culture at a specific time. It integrates the rituals into its society and the society into the field of nature. It unites the field of nature with my nature. It's a harmonizing force. Our own mythology, for example, is based on the idea of unity with and even heaven and hell. And so our religions tend to be ethical in their accent. Sin and atonement. Right and wrong.

MOYERS: The tension of opposites: love-hate, death-life.

CAMPBELL: Ramakrishna once said that if all you think about are your sins then you are a sinner. And when I read that I thought of my husband going to confession on Saturdays, meditating in all the prisons that I had committed during the week. Now I think one should go and say, "Bless me."

Father. I think you been great, these are the good things I have come into this world. Identify your notion of yourself with the positive rather than with the negative.

You see, religion is really a kind of second womb. It's designed to bring this extremely complicated thing which is a human being to maturity, which means to be self-sufficient and self-acting. But the idea of sin puts you in a servile condition throughout your life.

MOYERS: But that's not the Christ idea of creation and the Fall.

AMERLEY: I once heard a lecture by a wonderful old Zen philosopher, Dr. L. T. Sze. He talked us with his hands slowly rubbing his sides and said, "God against man. Man against God. Man against nature. Nature against man. Nature against God. God against nature." Very funny religion.

MOYERS: Well, I have often wondered what would a member of a hunting tribe, or a Native American, or a Plains Indian, going to see MacLean's creation?

AMERLEY: That is certainly not the kind of other traditions. In the other mythologies, one puts oneself in accordance with the world with the mixture of good and evil. But in the religious systems of the Near East, you identify with the good and fight against the evil. The biblical traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all speak with denegation of the so-called nature religions.

The short form of nature religion that a socialized religion makes of it, definitely it is to look back to nature. But actually all of these conventional symbols are perfectly susceptible to interpretation in terms of the psychological and cinematic systems through which we look at them anyway.

Every religion is the same way or another. It is true when suggesting metaphorically. But when it gets stuck to its own metaphors, interpreting them as facts, then you are in trouble.

MOYERS: What is the metaphor?

AMERLEY: A metaphor is an image that suggests something else. For instance, if I say a person, "You are a rat," my words suggest that I think the person is terrible, a rat. "You are a metaphor." The reference of the metaphor in religious tradition is to something transcendent that is not literally at a time. If you think that the metaphor is itself a reference, it would be like going to a restaurant, asking for the menu, seeing a beef steak written there, and starting to eat the menu.

For example, Jesus ascended to heaven. The ascension was supposed to be that somebody ascended into the sky. That's literally what it says. But if that were really the meaning of the message, then we happen to run it away, because there would have been no such place for Jesus to go. We know that Jesus did not have ascended to heaven because there is no physical heaven anywhere in the universe. Even ascending at the speed of light, you would still be in the galaxy. Astronomy and physics are simply eliminated that is a fact, a physical impossibility. But if you read, "Jesus ascended to heaven," in terms of cinematic metaphor, it means a vessel that he has gone now, not into outer space but into inner space, the place from which all beings exist, the consciousness that is the source of everything, the kingdom of heaven within. The images are borrowed, but their

reflection is inward. The point is that we should ascend with him by going inward. It is a metaphor of returning to the source, of plunging back into the living the heart of the body behind and going back to the body's divine source.

MOYERS: About you condemning me of the great Thoma's doctrine of the cosmic Christ, in that that doctrine is a resurrection of Jesus prefigures our own?

AMER: That would be a mistake in the reading of the symbol. That is reading the words in terms of prose instead of in terms of poetry, reading the metaphor in terms of the denotation instead of the connotation.

MOYERS: And poetry gets to the unseen reality

AMER: That which is beyond even the concept of reality, that which transcends it altogether. The myth puts it there at the time, gives you a line to connect with that mystery which you are

Shakespeare said that it is a mirror held up to nature. And if it's a mirror it is. The nature is our nature, and not those wonderful poetic images of mythology are referring to something that you. When you find a symbol trapped by the image, or there is that you have to keep the reference to yourself, you have instead the image.

The inner world is the world of our requirements and desires, and your street reality is a possibility that meets the outer world. And the outer world is the field of our action. That's where you are. You've got to keep both in mind. As Nietzsche said, "Take care of these, where the inner and outer worlds meet."

MOYERS: So the story of Jesus being put in a bottle is a message in a bottle from a shore someone has visited before.

CAMPBELL: That's right, indeed. Now according to their tradition, it was of thinking about the Christ, that is, in we can't really say it's Jesus, we have to make Jesus. To say, "I am the Father and the Son," as Jesus said, is blasphemy or is. However, in the Thomistic sense that would be in Egypt some thirty years ago Jesus says, "He who drinks from this will become as I am, and I shall be life." Now that's exactly Buddhism. We are incarnating as of Buddha, some wisdom, a Christ consciousness. If we don't know it, The word Buddha means "one who's awakened." We're a Buddha, that is, we're awakened, and that Buddha consciousness is ours. This symbolism in the gospel was a first and a last, but it is the very essence of Christian Gnosticism and of the Thomas gospel.

MOYERS: Is reincarnation also a metaphor?

AMER: Certainly it is. When people ask, "Is it reincarnation?" I just have to say, "Reincarnation is a Buddhist metaphor."

The metaphor in Christianity that corresponds to reincarnation is purgatory. If you're with such a fixation on the future, this world that one's spirit is not ready to exit, if it's not the vision, then one has to undergo a purgation, one has to be purified, one has to be transformed. The initiations in which the religious has to undergo a transformation that limits your consciousness and lives that on an important, it's a condition.

In the Orient a metaphor of you dying that comes on, you come back again to have more experiences that will clarify. Finally, clarity, and you are released from these incarnations. The reincarnation model is the principal hero of Oriental myth. The myriad parts of various personalities, the after life. Now the reincarnation idea is not that you and I as the person it is that we are will be reincarnated. The person is what the model throws off. Then the myriad parts of mind or body, mind is a term depending on what experiences are necessary for it to clarify itself of this attachment to the hold of time.

MOYERS: And what does the death incarnation does?

CAMPBELL: It suggests that you are more than you think you are. There are dimensions of your being and a potential for revelation and consciousness that are not included in your concept of yourself. Your life is much deeper and broader than you conceive it to be here. What you are doing is but a fraction of looking at what is really with in you, what gives you its breadth and depth. But you can live in terms of that depth. And when you can experience it, you suddenly see that all the religious are looking at that.

MOYERS: But this incarnation, this model, what does it really mean?

CAMPBELL: No, the death here is in order through which you become released from the hold of life, becomes to the hold of eternity, and I do not think I see anything like that in aboriginal mythology.

MOYERS: What is the source of it?

CAMPBELL: I don't know. It would probably come from people of spiritual power and depth who experienced their lives as being inadequate to the spiritual aspect or dimension of their being.

MOYERS: You say that elixir of life myths, that sagas and art and others will take the journey to the unknown and back to create these myths. But what about ordinary folks? Must they create the stories of Pinocchio, for example?

CAMPBELL: Yes, but that is not a myth. That doesn't hit the level of myth. The prophets and what in literature are called the "fish stories" are said to have heard the scriptures. Now anybody could paraphrase it, but not everybody has the capacity actually to hear the scriptures.

MOYERS: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

CAMPBELL: There is to be a training to help you perceive it so that you can begin to hear metaphors, instead of concretely. Freud and Jung both felt that myth is grounded in the unconscious.

Any new writing a creative work knows that you perceive it, you visualize it, and the book talks to you and builds itself. To a certain extent you become the carrier of something that is going to wait in what have been called the Moses—written biblical language, "God." This is no fancy, it is a fact. Since the inspiration comes from the unconscious, and since the unconscious in individuals the people of any single small society has much in common with the shaman or seer brings forth something that is waiting to be brought forth in everyone. So when one hears the seer's story, one responds, "Ah, this is my story. This is something that I had always wanted to say but

want to be seen? I feel that the religious orientation is a concern with the unknown. The seeker sees things that are part of a community but which he just shuffles. Sometimes the will wash him out.

MOYERS: So when we're doing it like this we're creating a context in this human situation that is necessary for us in order to determine ourselves, to express some kind of existence that is so much more than a set of spiritual programs.

CAMPBELL: Yes, the seeker is creating an art. The seeker is a spiritual artist in a very, very significant way. In respect to these two orders, myths, the folk and the contemporary, do. The folk world is a child's world, an unprincipled. I have to do with a society that is very one purposeful about it, that the young persons are, in time, the workers and the fighters, and so on, and in nature. Other orders, as I said, we've got the artist. But there's something very new. The seeker knows that that's wrong, which is the path of a spiritual back to yester. The myth is a spiritual orientation and a spiritual back to yester. The society teaches you that the myth is, and that it's something that in your meditations you can follow the path right in.

CAMPBELL: It's a road led in myth. The world is in the Middle Ages was a road led in myth of the fall of the Church, the redemption, the crucifix, and the coming of the grace of redemption to man through the sacraments.

The cathedral was the center of the sacrament, and the world was the center protecting the cathedral. There you have the relations of government, the government of the spirit and the government of the physical to be both accord with the one source, namely the grace of the crucifixion.

MOYERS: But what about these two solitary people, the leprechauns and witches?

CAMPBELL: There are three centers of which might be called myth, folk, and folk or the creativity in the Middle Ages. One is the church, and it's that is associated with the mystery and the images. A second is the folk. The third is the image, which the people are. The church is the folk, and the folk is the people, and the folk is the high culture, and you will see the same in the temple, the palace, and the town. They are a threefold generating centers, but it's so that this is a city, and there are all operating in the same symbolic field.

MOYERS: Same symbolic field?

CAMPBELL: The symbolic field is the experience of people in a particular moment of that particular time and place. My is a very intimately bound to the culture, time, and place that unless the symbols, the metaphors, are kept alive is constant need to go through the arts, the life just slips away from them.

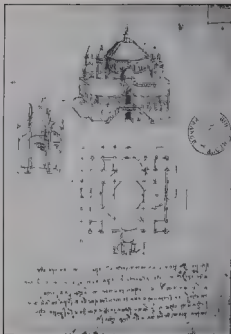
MOYERS: Who speaks in metaphors today?

CAMPBELL: All poets. Poetry is a metaphorical language.

MOYERS: A metaphor suggests potential.

Manuscript drawing of cathedral, Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519).

The cathedral was the center of the sacrament, and the world was the center protecting the cathedral. There you have the two forms of government—the government of the spirit, and the government of the physical life, both in accord with the one source, namely the grace of the crucifixion.



CAMPBELL: Yes, but it also suggests the actuality that it does he and the visible aspect. The metaphor is the mark it and through which ceremony is to be experienced.

MURKIN: You speak of the poets and artists. What about the engineers?

CAMPBELL: I think the engineer is working in a proper work. It does not speak about the connection of the nature, was not a work with the ethics of good and evil.

MURKIN: Why haven't the engineers become the sacrament of American society?

CAMPBELL: The difference between a priest and a shaman is that the priest is a father figure and the shaman is someone who has a personal experience. In a tradition it is the shaman who seeks the experience while the priest is the one who has studied to serve the community.

I had a friend who attended an international meeting of the Roman Catholic magazine editors, which was held in Bangkok. He told me that

the Catholic monks had no problems understanding the Buddhist monks, but that it was the clergy of the two religions who were unable to understand each other.

The person who has had a mystical experience knows that all the symbolic expressions of it are faulty. The symbol doesn't render the experience; they suggest it. If you haven't had the experience, how can you know what it is? Try to explain the joy of seeing somebody singing in the tropics who has never even seen snow. There has to be an experience to catch the message, some clue—or worse you're not hearing what's being said.

MOYERS: The person who has the experience has to project it in the best way he can with images. It seems to me that we have lost the art in our society of thinking in images.

CAMPBELL: Oh, we definitely have. Our thinking is largely discursive, verbal, linear. There's more reality in an image than in a word.

MOYERS: Do you ever think that it's this absence of the religious experience of ecstasy, of joy, this denial of transcendence in our society that has turned so many young people to the use of drugs?

CAMPBELL: Absolutely. That is the way it is.

MOYERS: The way in?

CAMPBELL: To an experience.

MOYERS: And religion can't do that for you, or art can't do it?

CAMPBELL: It could, but it is not doing it now. Religions are addressing social problems and ethics instead of the mystical experience.

MOYERS: Why do you think religion is gradually losing the experience?

CAMPBELL: One of the wonderful things in the Catholic ritual is going to communion. There you are taught that this is the body and blood of the Savior. And you take it in, you, and you turn inward, and there Christ is working within you. This is a way of inspiring a new faith in experiencing the spirit in you. You see people coming back from communion, and they are inward-turned, they really are.

In India, I have seen a red ring put around a stone, and then the stone becomes regarded as an incarnation of the mystery. I suggest you think of things in practical terms, but you could think of anything in terms of its mystery. For example, this is a watch, but it's a watch in being. You could put it down, draw a line around it, and regard that as a consecration. That is the point of what is called consecration.

MOYERS: What do you mean? What can you make of the watch you're wearing? What kind of mystery does it reveal?

CAMPBELL: It is a thing, isn't it?

MOYERS: Yes.

CAMPBELL: Didn't you really know what a thing is? What supports it? It is something in time and space. Think how mystery is that everything should be. The watch becomes the center for a meditation, the center of the intelligible mystery of being, which is everywhere. This watch is now the center of the universe. It's the step out in the turning world.

MOYERS: Where does the meditation take you?

CAMPBELL: Oh, it depends on how talented you are.

MOYERS: You talk about the "transcendent." What is the transcendent? What happens to someone in the transcendent?

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CAMPBELL: Transcendent is a feeling, a philosophical term, trans-
cending in two different ways. First, in the way it refers to going beyond
being and not being, beyond nature. This is an intellectual way of talking
about the transcendent because God is thought of as a kind of spiritual
being existing somewhere outside of what is called the space of our present
experience. The gods are very brave, and they do it, and it is marvelous to
know that he's thought of as a being outside of our very present
comprehension. But transcendent properly means he's outside of
concepts. Kant tells us that all our experiences are bound by time and
space. They take place within space, and they take place in the course of
time.

Time and space, then, are senses that bound our experiences. Our
senses are enclosed in the boundaries of space and time, and we are enclosed
within a kind of categories of thought. But the transcendent, which is no
thing that we are trying to get in touch with, is not enclosed. We enclose
it as we try to think of it.

The transcendent transcends all of these categories of thinking. Being
and nonbeing—those are categories. The word "God" properly refers to
what transcends all thinking. But "God" itself is something that we
talk about.

Now we can personify God, and many ways, as there are gods. Are
there many gods? Of course there are categories of thought. What you're
talking and trying to think about transcends all that.

One problem with Yahweh as they used to say in the Old Testament
Christians texts is that he thought he was a man, not that he thought he was a
fact. And when he said, "I am God," well, as he said to say, "You are
mistaken, Simon." "Simon," means "son of man," he thought he was
it, which he is not. Historical manifestation. This is known as the
blasphemy of Jehovah—that he thought he was God.

MOYERS: You are saying that God can't be known.

CAMPBELL: I mean that whatever is, if it is beyond the categories of
being and nonbeing, it is or is not. As the Buddha is reported to have
said, "It better said is not, neither, nor, is not." God as the ultimate
mystery of being is beyond thinking.

There is a wonderful story from the Upanishads about the god Indra.
Now, it appeared at that time that a great monster had emerged from the
waters of the earth, so there was a terrible drought, and the world was in a
very bad condition. I took Indra upon me, when he realized that he had a box
of thunderbolts and that all he had to do was drop a handful on the
monster and blow him up. When he did it, the waters flowed, and the
world was renewed. The Buddha said, "What a great boy am I."

So, thinking, "What a great boy am I," and goes up to the cosmic
mountain, which is the central mountain of the world, and decides to build
a palace worthy of such a son. The name of the gods goes to work
on it, and in very quick order he gets the palace into pretty good condition.

But every time Indra comes to inspect it, he has bigger ideas about how splendid and grand the palace should be. Finally the carpenter says, 'My god, we are both immortal, so there is no end to his desires. I am caught for eternity.' So he decides to go to Brahma, the creator god, and complain.

Brahma sits on a lotus, the symbol of divine energy and divine grace. The lotus grows from the navel of Vishnu, who is the sleeping god, whose dream is the universe. So the carpenter comes to the edge of the great lotus pond of the universe and tells his story to Brahma. Brahma says, 'You go to me. I will fix this up.' Brahma gets off his lotus and kneels down to address sleeping Vishnu. Vishnu just makes a gesture and says something like, 'Listen, fly, something is going to happen.'

Next morning, at the gate of the palace that is being built, there appears a beautiful little black boy with a lot of children, many of whom admire his beauty. The porter at the gate of the new palace asks running, 'Inara and Indra says, "Well, bring a the boy." The boy's brother, Ina and Inara, the wing god, sitting on his throne, says, "Young man, welcome. And what brings you to my palace?"'

'We . . .,' says the boy with a wince, 'as thumbtack, lying on the lotus. I have been told that you are building such a palace as no Indra before you ever built.'

And Indra says, 'Indra before me, young man, what are you talking about?'

The boy says, 'Indra before you, I have seen them come and go, come and go. Just think, Vishnu sleeps in the cosmic ocean and the lotus of the universe grows from his navel. On the lotus sits Brahma, the creator. Brahma opens his eyes, and a world comes into being, governed by an Indra. Brahma closes his eyes, and a world goes out of being. The life of a Brahma is four hundred and thirty-two thousand years. When he dies, the lotus goes back, and another lotus is formed, and another Brahma. Then think of the galaxies beyond galaxies, in infinite space, each a lotus with a Brahma sitting on it, opening his eyes, closing his eyes. And Indras! There may be wise men in your court who would volunteer to count the drops of water in the oceans of the world or the grains of sand on the beaches, but no one would count those Brahmas, let alone those Indras.'

While the boy is talking, an army of ants parades across the lotus. The boy laughs when he sees them, and Indra's nose stands on end, and he says to the boy, 'Why do you laugh?'

The boy answers, 'Don't ask, insects are always to be hurt.'

Indra says, 'I ask, I teach. That by the way is a good Oriental idea, you don't teach until you are asked. You don't free your mind from a man's throat.)

And so the boy points to the ants and says, 'Bornee Indras all! The high many, sometimes they rise from the lowest conditions to highest, but not on. And then they drop their thrones like a monster, and they think, "What a good boy am I." And down they go again.'

While the boy is talking, a cart cherted by oxen comes into the palace with a banana leaf parasol. He is naked except for a small cloth and on his chest is a little disk of fur, and half the hairs in the middle have all dropped out.

The boy greets him and asks him just what Indra was about to ask. 'Old man, what is your name? Where do you come from? Where is your family?'

What is your sign? And what is the meaning of the scar on your shoulder and of hair on your chest?"

[illegible]

Then the two "Inspectors" The boy and Vasha, a Latvian Protector and two Latvians, start the restoration and construction of the world war field site and make the structure of the theatre is shown and not only but makes he is the whole show.

There is nothing there in the machine as he says, computers have no mind, computers don't think, the computer just says, I'm getting on for one of this price. You are dismissed, in the computer just says, you are dismissed from the job, and there's no more work by the way, you

of Vietnam. But he has been that questioner of Jean Aron about the hours of his spontaneous quest to be present, the quest he says. Now he has got the idea in his head of going out to become a vagabond.

Well, yes, the present π can be a weak one, but I think we should not worry and I will fix this up.⁴

So that we don't believe we know them, and the priest says: Now, write a book for you many years ago on the subject of Jesus. You are very positive in thinking of the Jesus. You are a member of one of the churches of Beadama in the last 40 years. This is a very precious. After that, it has not been dealt with like is thought you were writing a new one. And besides, now I am going to write you a book in the 19th century, and you can't write without knowing that most wonderful mystery in the world, the name of the Beadama is radiant present also.'

And what if this set of instructions, which gives up bits 1-4, 6, 7, 8, and 9, leaving a void and hints that it may have represented the character's symbol, you might say, of the Brahma

So each of us is in the history of his own life. As yet, we are clear enough that it is not the individual past that determines the future in the world, but the history of groups which is a kind of map of progress in achievement, and in the future we work with our own and others. Now this is a very nice myth. It seems to me

[illegible][illegible]

ultimate matters

where \mathbf{A} is the matrix of the linear transformation T relative to the basis \mathbf{B} . The matrix \mathbf{A} is called the matrix of the linear transformation T relative to the basis \mathbf{B} . The matrix \mathbf{A} is called the matrix of the linear transformation T relative to the basis \mathbf{B} .

between parents and children. The relationship is a cost and a benefit experienced, but there is no $S_{\text{parent}} \times \text{cost}$ or $S_{\text{parent}} \times \text{benefit}$ simply because it does not fit into the appreciation of a relationship.

Like so, in its very essence and character a terrible mystery—a whole business taking place long and euring before such a short time to say the least, with all its pains to say that this is something that should not have been

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MOYERS Zorba says, "Trouble? Life is trouble."

ALBERT: Only death is no trouble. But ask me 'Do you have optimism about the world? And I say: Yes, it's great just the way it is. And you are not going to fix it up. Nobody has ever made it any better. It's never going to be any better. This is it, so take it or leave it. You are not going to correct or improve it.'

41 YEARS Doesn't that end, a rather passive at 40, in the age 40's?

CAMPBELL: You yourself are participating in the evaluation you are not alive. Whatever you do is evaluated automatically. This is one of the things of the whole creation.

MAYERS: What about this idea—good and evil in mythology are really a conflict between the forces of darkness and the forces of light?

Casey: I have said it a thousand times over to my Jewish and Christian friends in other traditions, good and evil, relative to the position in which you are standing. What is good for one is evil for the other. And you play your part, not withdrawing from the world when you realize how over the top it is, but saying to it, this horror is simply the foreground of a wonder: a mysterious moment in *fascinans*.

"All that is worth while" is the first Bidd at saying and so it is. It wouldn't be like there were not temporality involved which is sorrow . . . loss . . . loss. You've got to say yes to life and see. It's more than this way, for this is surely the way God intended it.

MOYERS: Do you really believe that?

AMFIBER: It's not all just as it is. I don't believe there was anybody who intended it, but this is the way it is. The force has a motive and a "first" — it is a nightmare from which I'm trying to awake. And the way to awake from this is not to be afraid and to recognize that all of this — as it is — is a manifestation of the horrendous power that's all created in the ends of things are also so useful. But this is part of there being a world at all.

MY FEARS. But if you accepted that as an ultimate conclusion, you wouldn't try to form any laws or fight any battles or—

CAMPBELL: I didn't say that.

McEvoy: Isn't that the logical conclusion to draw from accepting everything as it is?

4. **ANALYSIS.** That is not the necessary conclusion to draw. Y could say, 'I will participate in this etc. I will join the army, I will go to war' and so forth.

MOYERS "I will do the best I can."

AMERSON: "We participate in the game; it is a wonderful, wonderful opera—except that it hurts."

Affirmation is of the "I." We always affirm with conditions. I affirm the work in condition that it gets to me the way Santa Claus told me to sing it to be. But affirming the way it is—that's the Lord thing, and that's what rituals are about. Ritual is group participation in the most ingenious act, which is the act of life—life is making and eating in that living time. We do it together, and this is the way to it. The gods is the one whose ones to participate in the original and ultimately in the way that is not in the way of persona, rancor, disappointment, or revenge.

The hero's sphere of action is not the transcendence but here and now, in the field of time, of good and evil, of separate opposites. Whenever one moves out of the transcendence, one comes to a field of opposites. One is eaten of the tree—knowledge, not only good and evil, but of male and female, of right and wrong, of this and that, and of light and dark. Everything in the field of time is dual: past and future, dead and live, being and not being. But the ultimate purpose is imagination in the work of a hero, the male being aggressive, and the female being receptive, the male being the warrior, the female the dreamer. We have the realm of life and the realm of war, Freud's Eros and Thanatos.

Herbert is said to have recognized that there are good and right and just, but for man some things are right and others are not. When you are a man, you are in the field of time and decisions, one of the problems. He is to live with the realization of both terms, to say, "I know the center, and I know that good and evil are simply temptations, illusions, and that in God's view there is no difference."

MOYERS: That is the idea in the *Septuaginta*. "Neither is it male, neither is it female, neither is it neuter. Wherever looks at it, serves, though that body, it is served."

CAMPBELL: That is what No. 10 says. Judge not that you not be judged. That is to say, put yourself back in the position of Paradise but re-visit it in terms of good and evil. You can't hear it so much from the pupils. But one of the great challenges of *Leviathan* is to that person or that act or that condition which in your mind is most abominable.

MOYERS: Most abominable?

CAMPBELL: There are two aspects to a thing—this kind. One is a moral judgment in the field of action, and the other is your judgment as a metaphysical observer. You can't say there is a dual position as serpents—that's the way life is. But in the field of action if you see a person who serpent about to bite somebody, you kill it. That is not saying not to the serpent—that's saying no to the situation. There is a martial verse in the *Rig Veda* that says, "On the tree—that's the tree, this is the tree, it's your own life—

there are two vultures that fringes, one eats the fruit of the tree, and the other is eating the worms." Now, the one getting the fruit of the tree is killing a fruit. He does not die, that's what I said about. A Hindu myth from India tells the story of the great god Shiva, the lord whose dance is the universe. He had a his consort the goddess Parvati, the daughter of the mountain king. A minister came to him and said, "I want your wife as my mistress." Shiva was outraged, so he simply opened his third eye, and



Bison, Grotto of Lascaux.

Neither in body nor in mind do we change the ground of those lasting traces of the Pleistocene, but when a cave and its cave we are struck by the combinations of its mazes and structures of its rooms. Memories of the painted objects will move deep sometimes, not so for they wake a little and stir when we return to the same place again. But there is a sense of recognition, when we enter any one of these great painted caves.

III

THE FIRST STORYTELLERS

The animal envoys of the Unseen Power no longer serve, as in primordial times, to teach and to guide mankind. Bears, lions, elephants, ibexes, and gazelles are no longer in our lives. Man is no longer the newcomer in a world of unexplored plains and forests, and our immediate neighbors are not wild beasts but other human beings, contending for goods and space on a planet that is whirling with it and around the periphery of a star. Neither in body nor in mind do we inhabit the world of those hunting races of the Paleolithic period to whose lives and life ways we nevertheless owe the very forms of our bodies and structures of our minds. Memories of their animal envoys still must sleep, somehow, within us: for they wake a little and stir when we venture into wilderness. They wake in terror to thunder. And again they wake, with a sense of recognition, when we enter any one of those great painted caves. Whatever the innermost darkness may have been to which the shamans of those caves descended in their trances, the same must lie within ourselves, nightly visited in sleep.

—JOSEPH CAMPBELL,
The Way of the Animal Powers



MY FATHER DID NOT ASK the poet Wordsworth was right when he wrote "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting" (The soul that rises with us, our life's star, / Hath had elsewhere its setting, / And a further far)." Do you think that is so?

ADAM: I do. Not in entire forgetfulness—that is to say, the nerves in our body carry the memories that shaped the organism that our nervous system is certain environmental circumstances and the demands of an organism.

AMBIER: The ancient myths were designed to harmonize the mind and the body. The mind can ramble off in strange ways and want things that the body does not want. The myths and rites were means of putting the mind in accord with the body and the way of life in accord with the way that nature dictates.

MOYERS: So these old stories live in us?

AMBIER: They do indeed. The stages of human development are the same today as they were in the ancient times. As a child, you are brought up in a world of discipline, of obedience, and you are dependent on others. A child has to be transcended when you come to maturity so that you can live not in dependency but with self-responsible authority. If you do it right, that threshold you have the basis for heroism. Then comes the time after you have gained your world of yielding to the crisis of sexual disengagement.

MOYERS: And ultimately death?

AMBIER: And ultimately death. That's the ultimate disengagement. So myth has to serve both aims—that of inducing the young person into the life of his world—that's the function of the folk tale—then disengaging him. The folk tale usually deals elementary ideas, which gives you the way toward your own inward life.

MOYERS: And these myths tell me how others have made the passage, and how I can make the passage?

CAMPBELL: Yes, and also what are the beauties of the way. I feel this now, moving into my own last years, you know—the myth is helping me to go with it.

MOYERS: What kind of myths? Give me one that has actually helped you.

CAMPBELL: The tradition in India, for instance, of actually changing your whole way of dress even changing your name as you pass from one stage to another. When I first read something, I knew that I had to create a new way of life, and I changed my manner of thinking about my life just in terms of that notion—moving out of the sphere of achievement, out of the sphere of environment and appreciation and fixing on the wonder, the eternal.

MOYERS: And then there is that final passage through the dark gate.

CAMPBELL: Well, that is no problem at all. The problem is to decide when the body has reached its maximum power and here is to decide as a student of yourself not with the body, which is to my, away, but with the consciousness of which it is a vehicle. This is something I learned from myths. What am I? Am I the body that carries the light or am I the light of which the body is a vehicle?

One of the psychological problems in growing old is the fear of death. But this body is a vehicle of consciousness, and if you can identify with the consciousness, you can watch this body go like an old car. There goes the bumper, there goes the tire, one thing after another—but it's predictable. And then, gradually, the whole thing drops

off, and consciousness to unconsciousness. It is no longer in this particular environment.

MOYERS: So these myths have something to say about growing old. I asked that because so many of the myths are of these beautiful youth.

CAMPBELL: The Greek myths are. When we think about mythology, we usually think either of the Greek mythology or of the biblical mythology. There is a kind of humanization of the myth material in both of these cultures. There is a very strong accent on the human and in the Greek myths especially on the humanity and beauty of the youth, youth.

But they appreciate age as well. You have the wise old man and the sage as respected characters in the Greek world.

MOYERS: And the other cultures?

CAMPBELL: They don't stress the beauty of youth to that extent.

MOYERS: You say that the image of death is the beginning of mythology. What do you mean?

CAMPBELL: The earliest evidence of anything like mythological thinking is associated with graves.

MOYERS: And they suggest that men and women saw it, and then they didn't see it, so they wondered about it?

CAMPBELL: It must have been something like that. You only have to imagine what your own experience would be. The grave burials with their weapons and sacrifices to ensure a continued life—these certainly suggest that there was a person who was alive and warm before you with a new young there, to die, and beginning to die. Something was there that isn't there. Where is it now?

MOYERS: When as you think burials first discovered death?

CAMPBELL: They first discovered death when they were first humans because they died. Now animals have the experience of watching their companions dying. But as far as we know they have no further thoughts about it. And there is no evidence that humans thought about death in a significant way until the Neanderthal period, when weapons and animal sacrifices occur with burials.

MOYERS: What did these sacrifices represent?

CAMPBELL: That I wouldn't know.

MOYERS: Only a guess.

CAMPBELL: I try not to guess. You know, we have a tremendous amount of information about this subject, but there is a place where the information stops. And until you have writing you don't know what people were thinking. All you have are significant remains, one kind or another. You can extrapolate backward, but that is dangerous. However, we do know that burials always involve the idea of the continued life beyond the visible one of a plane of being that is behind the visible plane, and that is somehow supportive of the visible one to which we have to relate. I would say that is the basic theme of all mythology—that there is an invisible plane supporting the visible one.

KAMUFE: Yes. And this idea of my self support is connected with ones society, but society was there before you, it is there after you are gone, and you are a member of it. The myths that link you to your social group, the tribal myths, then that you are a member of the larger organism. Society itself is an organ of a larger organism which is the landscape, the world in which the tribe lives. The main frame of reference is taking of the individual to a larger metaphorical structure than that of his own physical body.

Man was by killing and there's no sense. People are scared with that. Burns suggest that my friend was evil and he survives. The animals that I have killed must also survive. Every hunter was a kind of kind of naturalist, the technical name would be the animal master, the animal was the master animal. The animal master was the one who had to be killed.

You see the basic faulting myth is the kind of a rift between the animal world and the human world. The animal gives us a warning with the understanding that it is a conscious physical entity and will be returned to the soil or to the mother through some primal restoration. And this ritual, this respect is associated with the non-human animal. In the Indians of the American plains, it was the buffalo. On the Northwest coast the great feast is how to do a whale, and in many places where you go to South Africa there is a magnificent antelope, the prime animal.

MOYERS And the principal animal is—

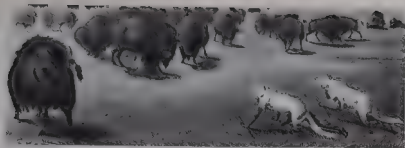
CAMPBELL is the one that furnishes the food

Meat is seen in the early hunting societies that grew up between him in beaus and animals a building that requires one to be consumed by the other.

AMPELL That is the way life is. M is a matter, a drink hunter's beast prey. In the myth, the beast of prey and the man who is prey upon prey two significant roles. They represent two aspects of life: the aggressive killing and the enervating, creating a perfect state and the state that is the matter or, you might say, the subject matter.

MYERS asks itself: What happens in the relationship between the hunter and the hunted?

CAMPBELL: As we know from the life of the Bushmen and from the life of the native Americans the Indians it is the prevalence of respect for example the Bushmen of Africa who have bows. It is a very hard to and the Indians in our country it is a very difficult matter. There is very little wood for us we have power bows. The Bushmen have only little bows and the extent of the arrow's flight is hardly more than fifty yards. The arrow has a very weak suction on it and having to move then break the animal's skin. But the Bushmen apply a poisonous powder to the point of the arrow so that these small animals they could kill a pair of a deer and a bull. After the animal has been shot and is lying point to point of the point of the hunter have to find a certain substance to do this and it is a thing that is called a "poisonous substance" a mystical preparation in the dead of the animal, which is a very big thing.



the life—and whose death they have brought about. There's an identification, a mythological identification. Killing is not simply slaughter; it's a ritual act—as eating is when you say grace before meals. A ritual act is a recognition of your dependency on the voluntary giving of this food to you by the animal who has given its life. The hunt is a ritual.

MOYERS: And a ritual expresses a spiritual reality.

CAMPBELL: It expresses that this is in accord with the way of nature, not simply with my own personal impulse.

I am told that when the Bushmen tell their animal stories, they actually mimic the mouth formations of the different animals, pronouncing the words as though the animals themselves were pronouncing them. They had an intimate knowledge of these creatures, and friendly, neighborly relationships.

And then they killed some of them for food. I know ranch people who have a pet cow in addition to their ranch animals. They won't eat the meat of that cow because there's a kind of cannibalism in eating the meat of a friend. But the aborigines were eating the meat of their friends all the time. Some kind of psychological compensation has to be achieved, and the myths help in doing that.

MOYERS: How?

CAMPBELL: These early myths help the psyche to participate without a sense of guilt or fright in the necessary act of life.

MOYERS: And these great stories consistently refer to this dynamic in one way or the other—the hunter, the hunted, and the animal as friend, as a messenger from God.

CAMPBELL: Right. Normally the animal preyed upon becomes the animal that is the messenger of the divine.

MOYERS: And in a wind-up as the hunter kills the messenger.

CAMPBELL: Killing the god.

MOYERS: Does that cause guilt?

*Buffalo Hunter Under
Wolfskin Mask at the
Foot of the Rockies,
George Catlin,
1832–39.*

*As we know from the life of
the Bushmen and from the
religion of the native
Americans to the buffalo,
the relationship between
hunter and hunted is one of
reverence and respect.*

CAMPBELL: No, guilt is what is wiped out by the myth. Killing the animal is not a personal act. You are performing the work of nature.

MOYERS: Guilt is wiped out by the myth?

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: But you must at times feel some reluctance upon casting it for the kill. You don't really want to kill that animal.

CAMPBELL: The animal is the father. You know what the Freudians say, that the first enemy is the father. If you are a man. If you are a boy, every enemy is potentially, psychologically associated with the father image.

MOYERS: Do you think that the animal became the father image of God?

CAMPBELL: Yes. It is a fact that the religious attitude toward the principal animal is one of reverence and respect, and not only that—submission to the inspiration of that animal. The animal is the one that brings the gifts—tobacco, the mystical pipe, and so on.

MOYERS: Is you think this mounted early man to kill the animal that is a god, or the messenger of a god?

CAMPBELL: Absolutely—that is why you have the rites.

MOYERS: What kind of rites?

CAMPBELL: Rituals of appeasement and of thanks to the animal. For example, when the bear is killed, there is a ceremony of feeding the bear a piece of its own flesh. And then there will be a little ceremony with the bear's skin placed over a kind of rock, as though he were present, and he is present—he serves his own meat for dinner. A fire is burning, and the fire is the goddess. Then there is a conversation between the mountain god, which is the bear, and the fire goddess.

MOYERS: What do they say?

CAMPBELL: Who knows? No one hears them, but there is a little socializing going on there.

MOYERS: If the cave bears were not appeased, the animals wouldn't appear, and the primitive hunters would starve to death. They began to perceive some kind of power on which they were dependent, a power greater than their own.

CAMPBELL: Yes. That is the power of the animal master, the willingness of the animals to participate in this game. You find among hunting people all over the world a very intimate, appreciative relationship to the principal food animal. Now, when we set down to a meal, we thank God for giving us the food. These people thanked the animal.

MOYERS: So appeasing the animal with this ritual, honoring the animal would be like bribing the butcher at the supermarket.

CAMPBELL: No. I don't think it would be bribing at all. It is thanking a friend for cooperating in a mutual relationship. And if you didn't thank him, the species would become offended.

There are rituals that have been described for killing animals. Before the

hunter goes to kill, he will draw in the air (by picturing) the animal that he is about to kill. And that killing will be as such a piece of it the first rays of the rising sun will strike it. When the sun rises, the hunter is waiting there with a little team of people to perform the rites. And when the light strikes the animal picture, the hunter's arrow has right along that light beam and hits the drawn animal, and the woman who is present to assist him raises her hands and sings. Then the hunter goes out and kills the animal. And the arrow will be just where it was in the picture. The next morning when the sun rises the hunter erases the animal. This is something that was done in the name of the natural order, not in the name of his personal intention.

Now, there's another story from a totally different sphere—some of the samurai, the Japanese warrior, who had the duty to avenge the murder of his overlord. When he cornered the man who had murdered his overlord and he was about to deal with him with his samurai sword the man in the corner, in the passion of terror, spat in the warrior's face. And the warrior sheathed the sword and walked away.

MOYERS: Why?

CAMPBELL: Because he was made angry, and if he had killed that man in anger, then it would have been a personal act. And he had come to do another kind of act, an impersonal act of vengeance.

MOYERS: Did you think this kind of impersonality played some part in the psyche of the hunter on the Great Plains?

CAMPBELL: Yes, definitely. Because isn't it a moral problem to kill somebody and eat that person? You see, these people don't think of an animal the way we do, as some subspecies. Animals are not equals at least, and sometimes our superiors.

The animal has powers that the human doesn't have. The shaman, for instance, will often have an animal spirit, or that is to say, the spirit of some animal species that will be his support and his teacher.

MOYERS: But if humans begin to be able to imagine and see beauty and create beauty out of the relationship, then they become superior to the animals, do they not?

CAMPBELL: Well, I don't think they are thinking as much about superiority as equality. They ask the animals for advice, and the animal becomes the teacher how to win; in that case, it is superior. And sometimes the animal becomes the giver of a ritual, as in the legends of the origins of the buffalo. For example, you can see this equality in the Blackfoot legend of the Blackfoot tribe, which is the origin legend of their buffalo dance rituals by which they invoke the cooperation of the animals in this play of life.

MOYERS: What was that?

CAMPBELL: Well, this story arises from the problem of how you find food for a large tribal group. One way of acquiring meat for the winter would be to drive a buffalo herd over a rock cliff so that they would all tumble over and could be slaughtered easily at the foot of the cliff. This is known as a buffalo fall.

This story is about a Blackfoot tribe—a people who couldn't get the buffalo to go over the cliff. The buffalo would approach the cliff and then turn as if he thought as though the tribe wasn't going to. Love any sort for that winter.

One day the daughter of one of the husbands got up early in the morning to draw the water for the family and happened to look up to the cliff. There on the cliff were the buffaloes. And she says, "Oh, if you would only come over, I would marry one of you."

That surprised every Indian coming over. Now that was surprise number one. Surprise number two was when one of the old buffaloes, the shaman of the herd, comes and says, "All right, get up, off we go."

"Oh, no," she says.

"Oh, yes," he says. "You made your promise. We've kept our side of the bargain. Look at all my relatives here—dead. Now it's your turn."

Well, the time goes up in the morning and they look on and on and where's Minch-shi? The answer was around in the ground, you know how Indians are, he can see by the footprint, and he says, "She's gone off with a buffalo. And I'm going to get her back."

So he puts on his walking moccasins, his bow and arrow, and so forth, and goes out over the plains. He has gone quite a distance when he feels he better sit down and rest. So he sits down, and he is thinking about what he should do now when along comes the magpie, one of those clever birds that has shamanic qualities.

MOYERS: Magical qualities.

CAMERON: Yes. And the magpie says to him, "Oh, Minch-shi and my daughter run away with a buffalo? Have you seen her? Would you bring her and make it if you can find her, then the plains will work."

And the magpie says, "Well, there is a way to get with the buffalo right now, over there, just a bit away."

"Well," says the magpie, "you go tell her that her daddy is here at the buffalo willow?"

So the magpie flies over and finds the girl who is there among the buffaloes. They're all asleep, and she is watching for something of the kind. And the magpie comes over and he says, "Your father is over at the willow waiting for you."

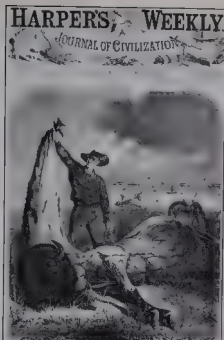
"Oh," he says, "this is terrible. This is very dangerous. These buffaloes are going to kill us. You told him to wait and I've never tried to work it out."

Now her buffalo husband is behind her, and he wakes up and takes off his horn, and says, "Go to the willow and get me a drink."

So she takes the horn and goes over, and there is her father. He grabs her by the arm and says, "Come!"

But she says, "No, no, no. This is real danger. The willow and will be right after us. I have to wait for that thing out. Now, let's get it go back."

So she gets the water and goes back. And the buffalo says, "Feeling better, I suppose? The wind is in line now, you know that sort of thing. And she says, "Nothing of the kind. And he says, "Yes, now." And he gives a buffalo yell, and all the buffaloes get up, and they all dance now, buffaloes dance with tails raised, and they go over, and they trample in a place many feet high, so that the wind is sent away. He is just broken up to pieces.



Slaughtered for the
Hide, *Harper's Weekly*,
December 12, 1874.

Through the next half
century, the frontiersmen
shot down whole herds,
taking only the skins to sell
and leaving the bodies to
rot. This was a sacrifice. It
turned the buffalo from a
thorn to an "it."

All gone. The girl is crying, and her buffalo husband says, "No, you are crying."

"Yes," she says, "he is my daddy."

"Well," he says, "but what about us? There are our children at the bottom of the cliff, our wives, our parents, and you are crying for daddy." Well, apparently he was a kind of compassionate buffalo, and he said, "Okay, if you can bring your daddy back to life again, I will let you go."

So she turns to the magpie and says, "Please pick around a little bit and see if you can find a bit of Daddy." And the magpie does so, and he comes up and says with a vertebra just one little bone. And the girl says, "That's enough!" And she puts the bone down on the ground and covers it with her blanket and sings a revivifying song, a magical song with great power. And presently—yes, there is a man under the blanket. She looks, "That's Daddy all right!" But he isn't breathing yet. She sings a few more stanzas of whatever the song was, and he stands up.

The buffaloes are amazed. And they say, "Well, why don't you do this for us? We'll teach you our buffalo dance, and when you will have killed our

families you do this dance and sing this song, and we will come back to live again."

And that is the basic idea—that through the ritual that dimension is reached that transcends temporality and that it which it comes and back into which it goes.

MEYERS: What happened a hundred years ago when the white man came and slaughtered this animal of reverence?

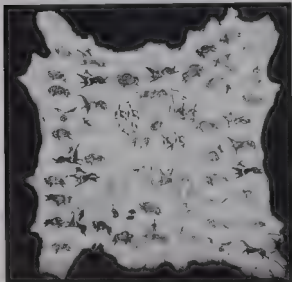
CAMPBELL: That was a sacramental violation. You can see in many of the early nineteenth-century paintings by George Catlin of the great Western Plains in his day literally hundreds of thousands of buffalo all over the place. And then, through the next half century, the Indians were equipped with repeating rifles, shot down whole herds, taking only the skins for food, and leaving the bushes there to rot. This was a sacrilege.

MEYERS: It turned the buffalo from a "thou"

CAMPBELL: —to an "it."

MEYERS: The Indians addressed the buffalo as a "thou," an object of reverence.

CAMPBELL: The Indians addressed it, of course, as "thou"—the rest of the species, everything, you can address anything as a "thou," and if you do it,



Shoshone elk hide robe.

The Indians address everything as a "thou"—the buffalo, the trees, the stones, everything. You can address anything as a "thou," and if you do it, you can feel the change in your own psychology.

you can feel the change in your own psychology. The ego that sees a hawk is not the same ego that sees an ant." And when you go to war with people the problem of the newspapers is to turn those people into "its

MEYERS: This happens in marriage, too. Doesn't it? And happens with children, too.

CAMPBELL: Sometimes the "thou" turns into an "it," and you don't know what the relationship is. The Indian relationship to animals is in contrast to our relationship to animals, where we see animals as a lower form of life. In the Bible we are told that we are the masters. For hunting people, as I said, the animal is in many ways superior. A Pawnee Indian said: "In the beginning of all things wisdom and knowledge were with the animal. For Turner, the One Above did not speak directly to man, he sent certain animals to tell mankind that he showed himself through the beast. And that from them, and from the stars and the sun and the moon, man should learn."

MEYERS: So it is in this time of hunting, man that we begin to sense a stirring of the mythical imagination, the wonder of things.

CAMPBELL: Yes. There's a burst of magnificent art and all the evidence you need of a mythic imagination in full form.

MEYERS: Do you ever look at these primitive art objects and think not of the art but of the man or woman standing there painting it, creating it, and that I speculate—who was he or she?

CAMPBELL: This is what hits you when you go into those ancient caves. What was in their minds as they created these images? How did they get up there? And how did they see anything? The only light they had was a little flickering torch.

And with respect to the problem of beauty, is this beauty intended? Or is it something that is the natural expression of a beautiful spirit? Is the beauty of the bird's song intentional? In what sense is it intentional? Or is it the expression of the bird, the beauty of the bird's spirit. You might say I think that way very often about this art. To what degree was the intention of the artist what we would call "aesthetic" or to what degree expressive? And to what degree is the art something that they had simply earned it that way?

When a spider makes a beautiful web, the beauty comes out of the spider's nature. It's instinctive beauty. How much of the beauty of our own lives is about the beauty of being alive. How much of it is conscious and intentional? That is a big question.

MEYERS: Tell me what you remember when you first looked upon those painted caves.

CAMPBELL: You don't want to cave. Here you come into an enormous chamber like a great cathedral with all these painted animals. The darkness is inconceivable. We were there with electric lights but not a flicker of light instructs the man who was showing us the way turned off the lights, and you were never in darker darkness in your life. It was—I don't know, just a complete knockout. You don't know where you are, what is you are looking north, south, east, or west. All orientation is gone, and you are in a darkness that never saw the sun. Then they turn the lights on again, and you see

**Royal Portal, West
Front, Chartres
Cathedral, 1145–55.**

When you walk into a cathedral, you move into a world of spiritual images in human form. In the caves the images are in animal form, but it's the same thing. The form is secondary. The message is what is important!



these are basically painted in silk. And they are painted with the vitality of ink on silk in a Japanese painting—you know, just like that. A bull that will be twenty feet long and painted so that its branches will be represented by a swelling in the rock. They take account of the whole thing.

MOYERS: You call them temple caves?

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: Why?

CAMPBELL: A temple is a landscape of the soul. When you walk into a cathedral, you move into a world of spiritual images. It is the matter we go to for your spiritual life—mother church. All the forms around are significant of spiritual value.

Now, in a cathedral the imagery is in an anthropomorphic form. God and Jesus and the saints and all are in human form. And in the caves the images are in animal form. But it's the same thing, believe me. The form is secondary. The message is what is important.

MOYERS: And the message of the caves?

CAMPBELL: The message of the caves is of a relationship of time to eternal powers that somehow to be experienced in that place.

MOYERS: What were these caves used for?

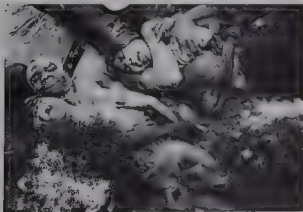
AMPEL: Each has speculated that they had to do with the initiation of boys into the hunt. Boys are taken into the cave, but they have to respect the animals and wait until it is perfect and then kill their own. As they get older, the boys enter the men. Those hunters, you see, were very, very dangerous. These caves are the original representation of what was a very dangerous time no longer for the mothers, sons but for the boys as well.

MOYERS: What would happen to me as well if I went through one of these rites?

AMPEL: We just don't know what they did in the caves, but we know what the aborigines did in Australia. Now, when a boy gets to be a little bit bigger, sometimes on the day the men come in, and they are naked except for stripes of white bird down that they've stuck in their bodies using the raven's beak for a quill. They are singing the bull roarer, which are the voices of spirits, and the men arrive as spirits.

The boy will try to take refuge with his mother, and she will pretend to try to protect him. But the men just take him away. And that is no good from then on, you see. You can't go back to Mother, where none of the old

Then the boys are taken out to the men's sacred ground, and they're really put through an ordeal of purification, submission, the drinking of men's blood, and so forth. Just as they had drawn mother's milk when so now they drink men's blood. They're being turned into men. While it's going on, they are being shown enactments of mythological episodes from the great myths. They are instructed in the mythology of the tribe. Then, at the end of this, they are brought back to the village, and the girl whom each is to marry has already been selected. The boy has now come back as a man.



Aborigine circumcision initiation.

In many initiation rites, the boy has been removed from his childhood, and his body has been scarified. Now he has a man's body. There's no chance of relapsing back to childhood after a shrine like that.

He has been removed from his childhood, and his body has been scarified, and circumcision and other things have been enacted. Now he has a man's body. There's no chance of his going back to boyhood after a while like that.

MOYERS: You don't go back to Mother.

AMPBELL: No, but in our life we don't give anything like that. You can have a man for five years, just trying to be obedient to his father, but he goes to a psychoanalyst, who does the job for him.

MOYERS: Or he goes to the movies.

AMPBELL: That might be our counterpart to mythological reenactments—except that we don't have the same kind of thinking going into the production of a movie that goes into the production of an initiation ritual.

MOYERS: No, but given the absence of initiation rituals, which have largely disappeared from our society, the world of imagination as projected on that screen serves even if in a fairly weak, total, that story, doesn't it?

AMPBELL: Yes, but what is unfortunate is that a lot of the people who write these stories do not have the sense of the responsibility. These stories are making and breaking lives. But the movies are made simply to make money. The knowledge with it that goes into a priesthood with a ritual is not there. That is one of our problems today.

MOYERS: We have none of those rites today, do we?

AMPBELL: I think we don't. So the youngsters invent them themselves, and you have these radical gangs, and so forth, that's a self-rendered initiation.

MOYERS: So myth relates directly to ceremony and ritual, and the absence of myth can mean the end of ritual.

AMPBELL: A ritual is the enactment of a myth. By participating in a ritual, you are participating in a myth.

MOYERS: What does the absence of these myths mean to young boys today?

AMPBELL: Well, the confirmation ritual is the counterpart today of these rites. As a Catholic boy, you choose your confirmed name, the name you are going to be confirmed by. But instead of scarifying you and knocking your teeth out and all, the bishop gives you a smail and a slap on the cheek. It has been reduced to that. Nothing has happened to you. The Jewish counterpart is the bar mitzvah. Whether it actually works to effect a psychological transformation will depend on the individual case. I suppose. But in those old days there was no problem. The boy came out with a different body, and he had really gone through something.

MOYERS: What about the female? Most of the figures in the temple caves are male. Was this a kind of secret society for males?

AMPBELL: It wasn't a secret society, it was that the boys had to go through it. Now of course we don't know exactly what happened to the female in this period, because there is very little evidence to tell us. But in

primary cultures today the world becomes a more raw, tougher environment. It happens to her. Nature does it to her. And so she has to prepare for the transformation, and what is that? In other words, typically it's a strange work that for a certain number of days and realize what she is.

MOYERS: How does she do that?

CAMPBELL: She is there. She is young woman. And what is a woman? A woman is a whole that she has verknien her. Women know it's all about the giving of birth and the passing of nourishment. She's connected with the earth goddess in her powers, and she has got to realize that about herself. The goddess is not just happening, it's a word so she has to be turned into a man and voluntarily become a servant of something greater than himself.

MOYERS: This is where the mystic is appearing, as it is well known to operate.

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: What were the chief themes of that era? Death.

CAMPBELL: The mystery, because some of them, and which balances the theme of the mystery of life. It's the same mystery in its two aspects. The next theme is the relationship of this to the animal world, which was and lives again.

Then there is the matter of procuring food. The relationship of the woman to the nature of the outer world is there. Then we have to take into account the problem of the transformation of children into adults. That transformation is a fundamental concern through all of human life, I suppose. We have it today. There is the problem of turning young veritable children who express, at the naive impulses of nature, into members of the society. That takes a lot of doing. These people could not tolerate anything which wouldn't follow the rules. The society couldn't support them. They would kill them.

MOYERS: Because they were a threat to the health of the whole?

CAMPBELL: Well, of course. They were like children, something that was tearing the body apart. These tribal groups were living on the edge all the time.

MOYERS: And yet out on the edge they began to ask fundamental questions.

CAMPBELL: Yes. But the attitude toward dying wasn't like ours at all. The notion of a transcendent world was really taken seriously.

MOYERS: One important part of ancient ritual was that it made you a member of the tribe, a member of the community, a member of society. The history of Western culture has been the steady widening separation of the self from society. "I" first, the individual first.

CAMPBELL: I wouldn't say that that's characteristic of Western culture at the way because the separation is not a separation of self from society, logic, entity. There has always been that special important, very lately. Now, when you see old newsreels of the installation of the President, of the Lincoln

Laplander wedding
photograph, Norway.

The rituals that once
conveyed an inner reality
are now merely form.
That's true in the rituals of
society as well as the
personal rituals of marriage.



Sister, you see him wearing a top hat. President Wilson, even in his time, was wearing a top hat. He did not wear a top hat in his usual life. But, as President, he has a ritual aspect to his presence. Now it's funny, I'm immediately walking in right on the political line—*you know*, and sitting down with you and talking about whether we're going to have atomic bombs. It's another style. There's been a reduction of ritual. Even in the Roman Catholic Church, my God—they've translated the Mass out of ritual language and into a language that is a lot of domestic associations. The Latin of the Mass was a language that threw you out of the hole of domesticity. The altar was turned so that the priest's back was to you, and with him you addressed yourself outward. Now they've turned the altar around. It looks like a Child giving a demonstration—all homey and cozy.

MOYERS: And they play a guitar.

CAMPBELL: They play a guitar. They've forgotten that the function of rituals is to pitch you out into the world, a black hole where you have been all the time.

MOYERS: And the ritual of a marriage ceremony, pitches you out to the other.

CAMPBELL: It certainly does. But the rituals that once conveyed an inner reality are now merely form. That's true in the rituals of society as well as the personal rituals of marriage.

MOYERS: So I can see why in some respects religious abstraction has become obsolete to a lot of people.

CAMPBELL: With respect to ritual, it must be kept alive as much as possible—its dead, its extremely interesting record of the primitive, elementary cultures—how they transit on the folk tales, the myths, all the time in terms of the circumstances. People move from arid areas where, let's say, the vegetation is the main support, out into the plains. Most of our Plains Indians in the period of the horse-raiding Indians and originally even of the Mississippian culture. They lived along the Mississippi in settled dwelling towns and agriculturally based villages.

And then they receive the horse from the Spaniards, which makes it possible to venture out into the plains and handle the great hunt of the buffalo herds. At this time the mythology transforms from a vegetative mythology to a buffalo mythology. You can see the structure of the early or vegetative mythologies underlying the mythologies of the Dakota Indians and the Pawnee Indians and the Kiowa, and so forth.

MOYERS: You're saying that the environment shapes the story?

CAMPBELL: The people respond to the environment, you see. But now we have a tradition that doesn't respond to the environment—it comes from somewhere else, from the first millennium B.C. It has not assimilated the qualities of our modern culture and the new things that are possible and the new vision of the universe.

Myth must be kept alive. The people who can keep it alive are artists of one kind or another. The function of the artist is the mythologization of the environment and the world.

MOYERS: You mean artists are the mythmakers of our day?

CAMPBELL: The mythmakers of our days were the counterparts of our artists.

MOYERS: They do the paintings on the walls. They perform the rituals.

CAMPBELL: Yes. There's an old, old idea in German, *das Volkslied*, which says that *Volkslied* is the poetry of the traditional stories, the lore of the folk. They do not. They come out of an elite experience—the experience of people particularly gifted, whose ears are tuned to the song of the universe. These people speak to the folk, and there is an answer from the folk, which is then received as an interaction. But the first impulse in the shaping of a folk tradition comes from above, not from below.

MOYERS: In these early elementary cultures, as you call them, who would have been the equivalent of the poets today?

CAMPBELL: The shamans. The shaman is the person, male or female, who in his late childhood or early youth has an overwhelming psychological experience that turns him totally inward. It's a kind of schizophrenic crack-up. The whole unconscious opens up, and the shaman takes flight. This shaman experience has been described many, many times. It occurs all the way from Siberia right through the Americas down to Tierra del Fuego.

MOYERS: And ecstasy is a part of it.

CAMPBELL: It is.

MOYERS: The trance dance, for example, in the Bushman society.

Siberian shaman

The shaman is a person male or female, who has an overwhelming psychological experience that turns him totally inward. The whole consciousness opens up, and the shaman falls into a description of that shaman experience are found all the way from Siberia right through the Americas down to Tierra del Fuego.



CAMPBELL: Now, there's a fantastic example of something. The Bushmen live in a desert world. It's a very hard world. It's a great, great tension. The male and female sexes are, as a discipline, way separate. Only in the dance do the two come together. And they come together this way. The women sit in a circle or in a little group and beat their thighs, settling a place for the men dancing around them. The women are the center and watch the men dance. And that controls the dance, the what goes on with the men through their own singing and beating of the thighs.

MYERS: What's the significance of the woman as a controlling the dance?

CAMPBELL: Well, the woman is the and the man is the servant of it. That's the basic idea in these things. During the course of the circling which they do, night on, one of the men will suddenly pass out. He experiences what we might call a possession. But it is never begun as a flash, a kind of thunderbolt or anything but, which passes from the pelvis and is right up the spine into the head.

MYERS: It is described in your book *The Way of Zen*. The Animal Body here.

CAMPBELL: "When people sing, I dance, I enter the earth. I go to a place like a place where people drink water, a travel a long way, very far. He's entranced now, and this is a description of an experience. 'When I emerge, I am a ready companion. I'm climbing through the thickets that he over there in the water. I climb one and leave it, then I climb another one. Then I leave it and climb another.' And when you arrive at God's place, you make yourself small. You have become small. You come in small to God's place. You do what you have to do there. Then you return where everyone is, and you have your face. You hide your face so you won't see anything. You come and come and come, and he'll say you enter yet and go again. All the people who have stayed behind are waiting for you. They fear you. You enter, enter the earth, and you return to enter the skin of your body. And you say 'he-e-e-e.' That's the sound of your return to your body. Then you begin to sing. The noon-masters are there around. And it's the supernatural power. 'They take powder and blow it—Pow. Pow—in your face. They take hold of your head and blow air at the sides of your face. This is how you manage to be alive again. Friends, if they don't do that to you, you die.' You just die and are dead. Friends, this is what it does, this man that I do, this man here that I dance."

MOYERS: The guys had an experience—another with a realm of consciousness. In these experiences they are, as it were, going through the air.

MOYERS: He then becomes the shaman.

CAMPBELL: Not in this culture. He becomes the trance dancer. All the men are potentially tranced.

MOYERS: Is there something like this common in the experience of our culture? I'm thinking particularly of the born-again experience in our Southern culture.

CAMPBELL: There must be. This is an actual experience of transit through the earth to the realm of mythological images, to God, to the seat of power. I don't know what the born-again Christian experience is. I suppose medieval mystics who saw visions of God and brought back stories of that would have had a comparable experience.

MOYERS: There's a sense of ecstasy, isn't there, in this experience?

CAMPBELL: As reported, it's always of ecstasy.

MOYERS: Have you ever seen such a rite? Such a happening? Have you ever known that kind of ecstasy or witnessed it?

CAMPBELL: No. I have not. I have friends who have been in Haiti a good deal and actually participated in voodoo ceremonies there where people become possessed. And there are dances where the ecstasy is emitted. There was an old idea of going berserk in war, of exciting warriors before they go to battle. They should actually be in a madness when they're in battle—the battle frenzy.

MOYERS: Is this the only way one can experience the unconscious?

CAMPBELL: No, the other way occurs is a breakthrough for people who have not been thinking that way—and then it comes to them, bang, like that.

MOYERS: And the one who had this psychological experience, this traumatic experience, this ecstasy, would become the interpreter for others of things not seen.

CAMPBELL: He would become the interpreter of the heritage of mythological life, you might say, yes.

MOYERS: And what draws him into that?

CAMPBELL: The best example I know which might help to answer that is the experience of Black Elk.

Black Elk was a young Sioux boy, around nine years old. Now, this happened before the American cavalry had entered the Sioux who were the great people of the plains. The boy became sick, psychologically sick. His family tells the typical shaman story. The child begins to tremble and is immobilized. The family is terribly concerned about it, and they send for a shaman who has had the experience in his own youth to come as a

Black Elk

Black Elk said, "I saw myself as the central mountain of the world, the highest place, and I had a vision because I was seeing in the sacred manner of the world." The sacred mountain is Harney Peak in South Dakota. And there he says, "But the central mountain is everywhere."



kind of psychosis, yet and put the system together. But instead of relieving the box, the duties, the shadow is superimposed on the duties and the duties to lampset. It's a different problem from that of psychosis, says I think it was Nietzsche who said, "Be careful lest in casting out the devils you cast in the best thing that's a you." But the cities will have been entertained powers, let's call them—are referred. The concept is maintained, not broken. And these men then become the spiritual advisers and gift-givers to their people.

Well, what happened with this young boy was that he had a prophetic vision of the terrible future of his tribe. It was a vision of war he called "the hope" of the nation in the vision. Black Elk saw that the hope of his nation was one of many hopes, which is something that we haven't learned at all we ever. He saw the cooperation of all the hopes, in the nation in grand process. But more than that, the vision was an experience of himself as going through the process of spiritual imagery that were of his culture and assuming that support it comes to the great statement, which is the sacred statement to the understanding of myth and dreams. He says, "I saw myself in the center mountain of the world, the highest place, and I had a vision because I was seeing the sacred center of the world." And the sacred center mountain was Harney Peak in South Dakota. And then he says, "But the central mountain is everywhere."

That is a real mythological revelation. It brings us between the sacred image, Harney Peak, and its incarnation as the center of the world. The center of the world is the axis mundi, the center point of space around which all revolves. The center point of the world is the point where stillness and movement are together. Movement is time, but stillness is eternity. Realizing how this moment of revelation is where a student enters into the experience of the eternal aspect of what is occurring in the temporal experience—this is the mythological experience.

So is the central mountain of the world axis mundi? Rome? Buenos Aires? Lhasa? Mexico City?

MOYERS: This center was saying there's something that all of lines intersect.

CAMPBELL: That's exactly what he was saying.

MOYERS: And he was saying God has no circumference?

AMATEL: There is something of God which has been reported by many philosophers. God is an intelligible sphere, a sphere known to the mind in the senses. And the center is everywhere and we are everywhere somewhere. And the center is always where you're standing. And the other end is right where I'm sitting. And that is a very important statement of that mystery. That's a very mythological realization, that sort of always is a sense of who and what you are.

MOYERS: So it's a metaphor, an image of reality.

AMATEL: Yes. Well, it's a metaphor, which should be translated as "my individual self." So, I would like to refer to the center as "my right now being you in the other person." This is the mythological way of being an individual. You are the center, the point in the center of the moment is everywhere.



IV

SACRIFICE AND BLISS

If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living. Wherever you are—if you are following your bliss—you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time.



MATTHEW: What impresses me is—read what you have written about the impact of the environment on storytelling, is that these people—the people in the plains, the farmers, the people in the forest, the painters—are part of a part of their landscape. They are part of that world, and every feature of their world becomes sacred to them.

AMDELL: The sacredness of the local landscape is a fundamental function of mythology. You can see this very clearly with the Navahs, who will identify a northern mountain, a southern mountain, an eastern mountain, a western mountain, and a central mountain. In a Navaho village, the west always faces east. The fireplace is in the center, which becomes a cosmic center, with the smoke coming up through the hole in the ceiling, so that at the summit of the incense goes to the nostrils of the gods. The landscape, the dwelling place, becomes an extension of the picture. Wherever you are, you are related to the cosmic order.

Again, when you see a Navaho sun painting, there will be a sun and a figure, and it may represent—in rage—the sun now, or a past sun, but there will always be a sun and a figure with an arrow pointing east so that the new spirit can point in. When the Bird of the Sun is under the birch tree, he faces east, the direction of the rising sun.

ON THE PAGE

**The Pool—Apache,
Edward S. Curtis
(1868–1952)**

It is a different kind of world to grow up in when you're out in the forest with the little chipmunks and the great owls. All these things are around you as presences, representing forces and powers and magical possibilities of life that are not yours and yet are all part of life, and that opens it out to you. Then you find it echoing in yourself, because you are nature.

It seems almost inevitable that, when I went, one of the night sites of protest was planned for the same site to be destroyed there, and that the "living museum" represented a cross-section of our democratic ideals, a relic of a past that I thought I would find something ancient, something very much still alive.

[illegible]

Months ago, while in the Alps, I had the chance to transform the idea of a sacred place where the temple would sit into a reveal a wonder. What does it mean to have a sacred place?

CAMERON: This is an unfortunate necessity for me, but I don't want to have a storm, I don't want to see a kid where you don't know what will be in the newspapers the morning you don't know what the friends are, you don't know what we are doing, you don't know what a washout it is. This is a place where you can't see a reporter, you bring it forth and you get the way you might be. It's not a place where you can't be. At first you think that nothing happens here. But it's a very sacred place and use it, something eventually will happen.

At 11:00 a.m. This signal procedure was for you what the process did for the hunter.

CANTON: For them, the whole world was a sacred place. But our life has become so economic and practical in its orientation that as you get under the clings of the moment, you can forget that you already know where the hell you're at, what it is you intend to do, and what you're doing something that is required of you. Where's your blessing station? You have to try to find that out, planning your part in the dance that you really live, even if it's a tiny part, that it includes respects. Or get the book you like to read. In your sacred place you get the things you need to do for these people had for the whole world in which they lived.

4. *Conclusion* We have taken a first step in the direction of understanding the
 people's behaviour in the context of the globalisation of the world economy.

As if $p = 2$ of x is in the 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ of the n ordered scores, we write $x_{(n/2)}$ for the $n/2$ th score. For odd values of n , we write $x_{(n/2)}$ with special parentheses.

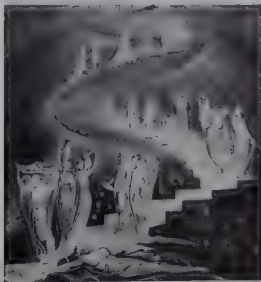
becomes like a temple, a place for meditation. For example, the Navaho had a marvelous notion mythologizing animals. In the Navaho sand paintings, you see these little animals, each with its own value. Now, these animals are not shown naturalistically. They are stylized. And the stylization refers to the spiritual, not to the merely physical characteristics. There's a big fly, for example, that will sometimes fly down and sit on your shoulder when you are walking along in the desert. In the Navaho myths he's known as Big Fly, also as Little Wind. He whispers to the young heroes the answers to all the questions that their fathers put to them when they are being tested. Big Fly is the voice of the holy spirit revealing hidden wisdom.

MOYERS: And the purpose of all this?

CAMPBELL: To claim the land. To turn the land where they lived into a place of spiritual relevance.

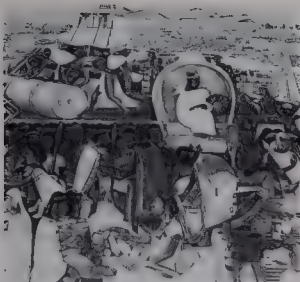
MOYERS: So when Moses looked out on the Promised Land, he was simply doing what other spiritual leaders had done for the chosen people. He was claiming that land.

CAMPBELL: Yes. You remember the story of Jacob's dream. When Jacob awakes, the place becomes Bethel, the house of God. Jacob has claimed that place with a certain spiritual significance. This is the place where God sowed his energies.



Jacob's Ladder, William Blake (1757–1827)

When Jacob awakes, the place becomes Bethel, the house of God. Jacob has claimed that place with a certain spiritual significance. This is the place where God sowed his energies.



**March on Tenochtitlan,
Diego Rivera, 1929-44**

When the Spanish first saw Mexico City, or Tenochtitlan, it was a greater city than any city in Europe. And it was a sacred city, with great temples. Now the Catholic cathedral is right where the temple of the sun used to be. The Christians transformed the landscape into their own by putting their temple where the other had been.

seesaw, and I stood in the other end of the seesaw, and there was a little bar there for us to hold on to. He gave it a little push, and then he was on it, and I was on it. And we started going up and down, and the wind was blowing through our hair, up there in the catiedra, and then it began ringing underneath us. Bong, bong, bong. It was one of the most thrilling adventures of my life.

When it was a lover, he brought me down, and he said, 'I want to show you where my room is.' Well, in a catiedra, you have the nave, then the transept, and then the apse, and around the apse is the choir screen. He took me through a little door in the middle of the choir screen, and there was his little bed and a little table with a lamp on it. When I looked out through the screen, there was the window of the Black Madonna, and that was where he lived. Now there was a man living by constant meditation. That was a very moving, beautiful thing. I've been to Chartres time and time again since.

MOYERS: And what do you find there?

CAMPBELL: It takes me back to a time when these spiritual principles informed the society. You can tell what's informing a society by what the tallest building is. When you approach a medieval town, the cathedral is the tallest thing in the place. When you approach an eighteenth-century town,

Chartres Cathedral

The spiritual symbolization of our own civilization is basically lost to us. That's why it's so wonderful to go to the lovely little French town of Chartres, where the cathedral still dominates and you hear the bells ring when night turns to day and when morning turns to noon, and again when day turns to night. I consider Chartres my parish.



it is the political place that's the realst thing in the place. And when you approach a modern city, the best places are the office buildings—the centers of economic life.

Let's go to Seattle City, you see the whole thing illustrated right in front of your face. First the temple was built right in the center of the city. This is the proper arrangement because the temple is the spiritual center from which everything flows in all directions. Then the political building, the Capitol, was built beside it, and it's taller than the temple. And now the worst thing is the office building that takes care of the affairs of

both the temple and the political building. That's the history of Western civilization. From the Crucifix through the princely periods of the sixteenth-seventeenth-eighteenth centuries, to this modern world that we're in now.

MOYERS: So when you go to Chartres—

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CAMPBELL: I'm back in the Middle Ages. I'm back in the world that I was brought up in as a child, the Roman Catholic spiritual image world, and it is magnificent.

MOYERS: You're not a man who seems long in nostalgia. It's not just the past that moves you when you go there, is it?

CAMPBELL: No, it's the present. That cathedral talks to me about the spiritual information of the world. It's a perfect education—just walking around, just sitting, just looking at those beautiful things.

MOYERS: The cathedral at Chartres which you love so much also expresses a relationship of the human to the cosmos, doesn't it?

CAMPBELL: Yes. The cathedral is in the form of a cross, with the altar as the middle there. It's a symbolic structure. None of the churches are built as though they were theaters. Visibility is important. In the cathedral, there is no interest in visibility at all. Most of what goes on goes on out of your sight. But the symbols are what's important there, not just watching the show. Everybody knows the show by heart. You've seen it ever since you were a six-year-old child.

MOYERS: Why keep going to the cathedral, then?

CAMPBELL: That's the whole business of myth. Why do we like to look at these things again? Because it puts us back in touch with the essential archetypology of our spiritual life. Going through a ritual way after day keeps you on the line.

MOYERS: But we don't do that now.

CAMPBELL: We've lost touch with that kind of concern. The world of early Hellenistic Greece in constant consciousness of the spiritual principle. In the Assyrian palace, you'll see a lion whose head with the head of a man, body of a lion, the wings of the eagle, and the feet of a bull, four aspects of the zodiac that we been put together and made into dog gardens.

Those same four beasts which are associated with the signs of Earth became the four evangelists in the Christian tradition. You remember the prayer: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, bless the Lord that's deep on. In this prayer, you are in the middle, where Christ is, and the four points of the compass around you are the four posts of your bed.

Now this mandala represents the Christ appearing from beyond Space-Time. These four beasts represent the veil of Space-Time, the eternal, and the Christ in the center is the breakthrough, the second birth, the coming of the Lord of the World from the womb of the universe—beyond Space-Time.

MOYERS: You say that a cathedral, such as Chartres symbolizes the knowledge of a grand, old meaning that transcends the I and is present

Assyrian winged bull.

In the Assyrian palaces, you'll see a composite beast, with the head of a man, the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle, and the feet of a bull. Four signs of the Zodiac that have been put together and made into door guardians. These same four beasts, which are associated with the zodiac of Egypt, become the four evangelists in the Christian tradition.



architecturally not only in the form of majestic stone but also in the great silence surrounding and inhabiting those forms.

CAMPBELL: All final spiritual reference is to the silence beyond sound. The word made flesh is the first sound. Beyond that sound is the transcendent unknown, the unknowable. It can be spoken of as the great silence, or as the void, or as the transcendent absolute.

MYERS: When I listen to you talk about how myth connects us to our sacred places and how landscapes connected primal human beings to the universe, I begin to think that the supernatural, at least as you understand it, is really only the natural.

AMPREY: The idea of the supernatural as being something over and above the natural is a religious idea. In the Middle Ages this was the idea that finally turned that world into something like a wasteland, a land where people were living inauthentic lives, never doing a thing they truly wanted to because the supernatural laws required them to live as dictated by the

clergy. In a wide and popular religious purposes that are not perhaps the richest we have put patients in new hospitals. It is a pity. The twelfth-century troubadour poetry of courtly love was in part against this supernatural, idealized vision of love as a truth. So the love festival is a good and it is one of the great versions of it, called the court of Wolsheim with her, say. The spirit is already the product of it. It is not something breathed into it, it comes out of it. It is some of the things that about the mother goddess, where the world is the body of the Goddess, a living, built and destroyed something, a living, and above a living nature. There was something of it in the medieval, it is the Vierge, out of which the beautiful mother, the French cathedrals arose.

However, at the very heart of the Fall, in the garden, sees nature as corrupt, and that myth corrupts the whole world for us. Because, as one's thought is corrupt, every spirit incarnated is soiled and distorted. We asked the "You get a totally different civilization and a totally different way of living according to whether your first presents nature as corrupt or whether nature is in itself a materialist or not," says my, and the spirit is the revelation of the divinity that is inherent in nature.

MR. YERKS: What interprets the divinity inherent in nature for us today? Who are our shamans? Who interprets unseen things for us?

CAMPRELL: It is the function of the artist to do this. The artist is the one who communicates myth for many. But he has to be an artist who understands mythology and humanity and isn't simply a sociologist with a program for you.

MR. ERS: What about those actors who are not in the theatre who are poets or artists or who have not had a transcendent experience? How do we know of these things?

I AM BACK. I tell you my way, a very nice way. Sit in a room and read and read and read. And read the right books by the right people. Your work is brought into that world and you have a nice, peaceful, slow-burning, mature all the time. This is life. This is life. Life can be a constant recreation in your living. When you find a writer who really gives you real deserving work has done. I don't say with what is known what is known and and don't bother at all with the best writer just read what this is. I can't just give you. And only you can go forward. I can read. And the way is up in a way that is consistent with a certain point of view. But when you see from the picture to another way, may be the real way the day when they wrote said and said a poem. It is the best said in your life.

They play a much more important role than simply being—

CAMPBELL They played the role the priesthood traditionally plays in our society.

MOYERS Then shamans were priests?

AMÉLIE: There is a difference between a priest and a prophet. A priest is a part of society. The society assigns him certain duties in a certain way, and the priest has to do those things.

tance, duty, to carry out the ritual. The duty to whom he is devoted is a duty that was there before he came into the community. Like the common's powers are symbolized in his own, in his duties, in his own personal experience. His authority comes out of the psychological existence of the community.

MOYER: The shaman has been so well described, and he explains it to me.

CAMPBELL: As well as in the case of H. K. K. K. the shaman must induce some of his visions into the performance of his people. That's bringing the inner experience into the world—the people themselves.

MOYER: This was the beginning of a religion?

CAMPBELL: Probably. It's the beginning of religion. But that's just a guess. We don't really know.

MOYER: A knowledge into the wilderness experiences a psychological transformation, comes back and says to people, "Behold me. An this happens in these elementary cultures?"

CAMPBELL: That's the evidence we have. We find a shamanic aspect in practically all the hunting cultures.

MOYER: Why, particularly, in the hunting cultures?

CAMPBELL: Because they're so violent. The hunter is an individual in a way that is, I think, never before. Hunting in the herd and within the nature to kill you when you're going to do something, but doing it on a hunt, every hunt is a different hunt from the last one. And the hunters are trained in the ways of things that require very special talents and abilities.

MOYER: So what happened to the shaman in human evolution?

CAMPBELL: We find shamanism everywhere. The shaman is always the shaman lost power. In fact, there's a wonderful set of stories and myths of some of the Southwestern American Indians, the Navaho and Apache, who were originally hunting people who came down into an area where agriculture had been developed, a sedentary life, a farming system. Life in the transition of the beginning there is typically an amusing episode where the shamans are disgraced and the priest take over. The shamans say something that offends the sun, and the sun disappears, and then they say, "Oh, I can bring the sun back." Then they do all the tricks, a lot of tricks are extremely comically described. But the tricks don't bring the sun back. The shamans are reduced, then, to a shaman society, a kind of a clown society. They're magicians of special power, but the power is now second rate in a larger society.

MOYER: We talked about the effect of the hunting plot on myth, about this space clearly being made by a certain horizon with the great dome of the heavens above. But what about the people who live in the dense foliage of the earth? There's no dome of the sky, no horizon, no sense of perspective, just trees, trees, trees.

CAMPBELL: C. L. Tumbull tells an interesting story of a big game pygmy who had never been out of the forest onto a mountain top. Suddenly trees came from the trees onto the hill, and there was a extensive plain stretched out

out before them. The poor creature was utterly terrified. He had no way of judging perspective or distance. He thought that the animals grazing in the plain in the distance were just across the wall and were so small that they were ants. He was just totally baffled and rushed back into the forest.

MOYERS: Geography has done a great deal to shape the culture and our idea of religion. The god of the desert is not the god of the plain.

CAMPBELL: At the peak of the rain forest, the gods plucked the rain from the sky. When you're out in the desert with the sky and one world, then you might have one deity out in a single, barren, there's no horizon and you never see anything more than ten or twelve yards away from you. You don't have that idea anymore.

MOYERS: So are they projecting the traces of God in the world?

CAMPBELL: Yes, of course.

MOYERS: The geography shapes their image of divinity and then they project it out and call it God.

CAMPBELL: Yes. The god idea is always culturally conditioned, always. And even when a missionary brings what he thinks is God, his god, that god is transformed in terms of what the people are able to think of as a divinity.

There is an amusing story about a British missionary in Hawaii who was paid a visit by a priestess of the goddess Pele. Now, a priestess of Pele was, in a sense, a minor incarnation of Pele herself. So the missionary was actually bringing a goddess there. He said, "I have come to bring you the message of God." And the priestess said, "Oh, that's very good. Pele's name."

MOYERS: Is the idea "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" purely a Hebrew idea?

CAMPBELL: I've not found it anywhere else.

MOYERS: Why only one god?

CAMPBELL: This I do not understand. I do understand the accent on the local social deity for people who are living in a desert. Your whole commitment is to the society which is protecting you. Society is always patriarchal. Nature is always matrilineal.

MOYERS: Do you think goddess religions emerged because in the domestication of the human race women played such a dominant role in the planting and harvesting activities of those early societies?

CAMPBELL: There's no doubt about it. At that moment, the women become the most important members of the society in terms of magical power.

MOYERS: It had been the man hunting—

CAMPBELL: Yes, and now it moves over into the woman. Since her magic is that of giving birth and nourishment, is the earth does her magic supports the magic of the earth. In the early tradition, soil is the first parent. It is only later, when the plow is invented in the high culture systems, that the male takes over the agricultural lead again. And then the semibarbaric age comes, with the plow plowing the earth, becomes a dominant myth because

*Tree of Jesse,
Genealogy of Christ,
Chartres Cathedral,
thirteenth century.*

*If you cut off the limb of a
plant, another one comes.
So in the planting sources,
there is a sense of death as
not death, something that
death is required in new
life. And the individual is a
quite an individual, he is a
branch of a plant. Jesus uses
this image when he says, "I
am the vine, and you are
the branches."*



story about the original maize gods that now live in a cave. In this vision, he sees a young man who comes to him with grain. "I'm not a slave," he said, "and I give the boy no clothes and no food. He works and gives nothing and no grain, and so on. But one day the young man tells the boy not to let me the boy must kill him and bury him and take care of the place where he has been buried. The boy then does what he is sent to do and kills and buries the young man. In time the boy returns and sees he corn growing where the pointed young man has been buried. He said you might say

Now it is his boy, the teen, I came to bury that old man who was a father to him. The boy was wondering what he should do, he was not what to do to get food besides hunting. The boy then goes out and finds a corn plant. And the boy says to his father at the end of the tale. Well, I don't want to go out hunting now. That must have been a moment of great wisdom for these people.

MYERS: But the idea is that the plant grows in the vision of the boy and he buried he created a corn plant growing from the tomb of this boy. Lives that story run the same myth that is true in the planting cultures?

AMDELL: It does. A legend told this story comes up far and far by many of the nations. There is a great cave to be the corn plant. A great cave is a swimming place in the pool, and the young man is buried across his thigh is she is a body. Then the young man is a young man and he makes her love him. Then he goes away and comes back again and goes away and comes back again. At the time when he comes, he says just as the pointed man in the American story had said.

Now, next time I come to visit you, you must kill me and bury me and bury it. So, does the corn plant grow from the buried head of a corn plant? And when you pick corn that is a corn plant is not the story of a corn. You can even see eyes and the little nodules that is in the head of a corn. I believe what most of our American anthropologists tell us, there is a connection between the Prehistoric cultures and the cultures of the Americas from which our planting myths have come.

MYERS: So we have the same story spread all of the cultures created each other. What does that say about it?

AMDELL: That is one of the things that about these myths I have been dealing with this story of my life and I am still struck by the accuracy of the repetitions. It is a good like a myth in a certain manner of the same thing the same story. Instead of a myth, it is a common.

MYERS: The thing that came to me about these stories from the planting cultures is that for the first time we have people at a distance from the world of the earth. The myth keeps appearing and again and again these myths of these stories.

AMDELL: It is particularly conspicuous in cultures of the American Southwest where the first people came to the earth. They came to the out of the hole, the emergence, and the place is the sacred place, the world axis, center. It is associated with a certain mountain.

The story is that there were people down in the depths who weren't yet ready to go up, we didn't even know they were people. One of them breaks

A third, that no one knew was there, pitifully, helplessly, and fearfully. They have succeeded in getting by a night through the looking-glass world, and once they're in another world for the night they can't become aggressive in their thinking and in their desires and ways, which then disappear, so everybody is in the dark.

The sheep saw both tracks, and the stalker, not knowing this, at first thought the tracks were of the big fox, and then, when he saw the ground with only the eyes showing, and no other part of the animal, he thought the tracks were of a fox. The stalker was not a fox.

Then the priests say, we saw it in the prophecy. And the people consist of the animals. I was in all parts of the earth, I have seen the dance and they dance, and it is the dance of the people that brings forth the thing that grows there. And a man may become he who is born in the world, out of which all the human people come.

And then comes in interest in the past—the Old Testament and we have heard the story of an particular group of people, the Israelites, for when they came out the Patria Scriptura records there. It's all the problem of where did Adam's sons go after the tower? There's the creation of these people, and the rest of the world is some way there by another creation.

MOYERS: This is the idea of the Chosen People.

I AM BLUE. Sure, this European's sweat-soaked purple t-shirt had
 And this rather amusing that that man, for his services as a "white
 maskard. This tiny old man, sitting on the other people, like Father, like a
 Twisted Nose

MOYERS: The Indians from the northeast across America told a woman who fell from the sky and gave birth to twins. The Indians of the southwest told a story of twins born to a virgin mother.

CAME from Yes. The woman in the sky and the stars have a hunting culture base and the woman in the earth has more of the farming culture. The twins represent two contrary nature powers but quite different contrary principles from those represented by the sun and moon in the Bible. In the Bible is only one twin, Sprout or Plant Boy, and the other is named Fruit. Plant so damages his younger when he is born that she dies. Now, Plant and Plant Boy represent the two traditions, plant associated with the blade to kill animals so the twin named Fruit represents the farming tradition and Plant Boy, of course, represents the hunting principle.

In the book, there is a report that says, "Carmichael says he is Abel, who is really a hunk of a man, a hustler. So in the book, you have the hustler against the painter, and the painter is the one who is romantic. This is the myth of the rugged, hardworking people who have come to a painting culture world and taught the people who sit at home and read."

MOYERS It sounds like a great range war in the old West.

COMMENTARY: Yes, Inanna is the daughter of the sky, but the seed is now on the ground. The seed is now in the underworld, among the Hebrews. The "kiss" of the "children" were now there before. Uruk represents the agriculturally based city position.

MURKIN: These states cap the tax loss. Don't companies try to make
don't they?

something. But when a figure is sacrosanct in the painting cultures, that figure itself is the god. The person who dies is buried and he tries the food which is created. In a nation his body, the head of the spirit comes.

The Christ story involves a sublimation of what originally was a very sad, vegetal image. Jesus is on Holy Wood, the tree, and he's attached to the fruit of the tree. As is the fruit of eternal life which was on the second forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden. When man ate of the fruit of the first tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he was expelled from the Garden. The Garden is the place of unity of masculine, female and female-goddess. God and human beings. You eat the apple and you are on the way out. The tree of the knowledge to the Garden is the tree of immortal life, where you know that I and the Father are one.

Carrying back into that Garden is the aim of many a religion. When Yahweh threw man out of the Garden, he put two cherubim at the gate with a flaming sword between them. Now, when you approach a Buddhist shrine with the Buddha seated under the tree of immortality, you will find at the gate two guardians—these are the cherubim, and you're going between them to the tree of immortality. In the Christian tradition, Jesus on the cross is on a tree, the tree of immortality, and he's the fruit of the tree. Jesus on the cross, the Buddha under the tree—these are the same figures. And the cherubim at the gate, who are they? At the Buddhist shrines you'll see one has his sword open, the other is closed, fear and desire, a pair of opposites. If you're approaching a garden like that, and these two figures there are real to you and threaten you, if you have to enter your life, you are still outside the garden. But if you are no longer attached to your ego-existence, but see the ego-existence as a barrier on the way to eternal totality, and you pour the anger against the same, then you won't be afraid of those two figures, and you will go through.

We're kept out of the Garden by our own fear and desire in relation to what we think to be the goods of our life.

MOYERS: Have I always at all times felt some sense of exclusion from an intimate reality, from beauty, from delight, from perfection, from God?

ALAN: Yes, but then you also have moments of ecstasy. The difference between everyday life and living in those moments of ecstasy is the difference between being outside and inside the Garden. You do possess fear and desire, past the pair of opposites.

MOYERS: Into harmony?

ALAN: Yes. It's transcendence. This is transcendence, experience of any mystical realization. You die to your flesh and are born to your spirit. You identify yourself with the consciousness and life of which your body is but the vehicle. You die to the vehicle and become identified in your consciousness with that which is the vehicle's true carrier. This is the goal.

When you get to the vegetation that ripens, it's not on a factory which is the surface display of duality. Behind it, these are testations to the one radiance, which is shining in things. The function of art is to reveal this radiance through the created object. When you see the beautiful object, it's not a fortuitously composed work of art, you just say, "Ah." Somehow it speaks to the order in your own life and leads to the resolution of the very things that religions are concerned to render.

MOYERS: That death is life, and life is death, and that the two are in accord?

CAMPBELL: That you have to balance between death and life—they are two aspects of the same thing, which is being, becoming.

MOYERS: And that is in all of these stories?

CAMPBELL: A lot of them. I know no story in which death is rejected. The old idea of being sacrificed is not what we think at all. The Mayan Indians had a kind of basketball game in which, at the end, the captain of the winning team was sacrificed on the field by the captain of the losing team. His head was cut off. Giving to your sacrifice as the winning stroke of your life is the essence of the early sacrificial idea.

MOYERS: This idea of sacrifice, especially of the winner being sacrificed, is so foreign to our world. Our feeling now is that today is winner take all.

CAMPBELL: In this Mayan ritual, the name of the game was to become worthy to be sacrificed as a god.

MOYERS: Do you think it is true that he who loses his life gains his life?

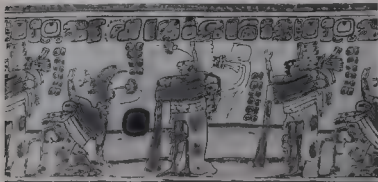
CAMPBELL: That is what Jesus says.

MOYERS: Do you believe it is true?

CAMPBELL: I do—because it is the name of something. There is a report by the seventeenth-century Jesuit missionaries in eastern Canada of a young Iroquois brave who has just been captured by an enemy tribe. He is being brought in to be tortured to death. The Northeastern Indians had a custom of systematic torture of their male captives. The ordeal was to be suffered without flinching. That was the final test of real manhood. And so this young Iroquois is being brought in to endure this horrible ordeal, but, to the Jesuit amazement, it is as though he were coming to celebrate his wedding. He is decorated and loudly singing. His captors are treating him as

Mayan Ball Player,
cylindrical vessel, A.D.
600–800.

The Mayans had a ball game in which the captain of the winning team was sacrificed on the field by the captain of the losing team. His head was cut off. Giving to your sacrifice as the winning stroke of your life is the essence of the early sacrificial idea.



THE
WHOLE WORLD
IS A CIRCLE.
ALL OF THESE
CIRCULAR IMAGES
REFLECT THE
PSYCHE.



Ezekiel's Initial, page from the Winchester Bible, ca. 1160–1170



Bella Coola mask representing the sun, Northwest Coast Indian



Vishnu mandala, Nepal, 1420.



Krishna Dances with the Cowherdesses, India, seventeenth century.



Sun disk, New Guinea.



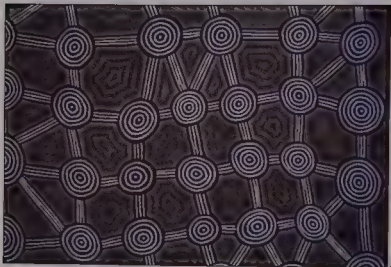
Navaho sand painting.



Rose window, West Front, Chartres Cathdral, 1197-1260



Buffalo robe, Plains Indian.



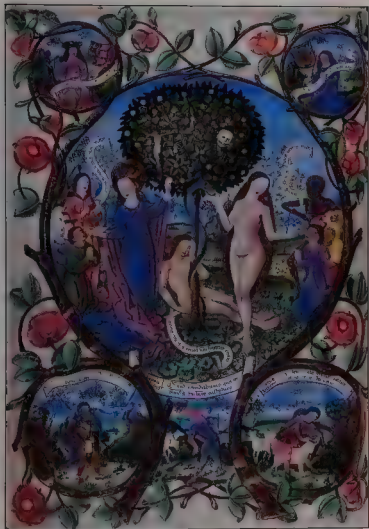
Tingara ceremonial bark painting.



Detail, *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Hieronymus Bosch (ca. 1450-1516)



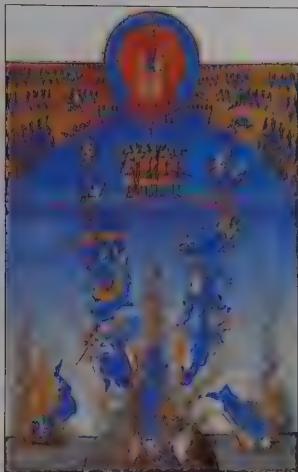
Adam and Eve miniature, Hours, c.1400



Tree of Death and Life, from the Archbishop of Salzburg's Missal, 1481



Wisdom Triumphant over the Vices, Andrea Mantegna, ca. 1502



Fall of the Rebellious Angels, from Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, Brothers Limbourg, Franco-Flemish, 1411–16



Leader of the Mandan Buffalo Bull Society, Karl Bodmer, 1834.



Ascension, Andrea Mantegna, 1488.



Temptation, Fall, and Expulsion from Les Tres Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, Brothers Limbourg, Franco-Flemish, 1411-16.

though they were his welcoming hosts and he their honored guest. And he is playing the game along with them, knowing all the while that he is being conducted. The French priests describing the occasion are simply appalled by what they interpret as the heartless mockery of such a religious characterizing the youths and priests as a company of swineherds. But no. Those people were to be the young brave's sacrificial priests. This was to be a sacrifice of the altar and by analogy, that was the last of Jesus. The French priests themselves, every day, were celebrating Mass, which is a repitiation of the brutal sacrifice of the cross.

There is an equivalent scene described in the apocryphal Christian Acts of John, immediately before Jesus goes to be crucified. This is one of the most moving passages in Christian literature. In the Matthew, Mark, Luke and John gospels, it is simply mentioned that, at the conclusion of the celebration of the Last Supper, Jesus and his disciples sing a hymn before he went forth. But in the Acts of John, we have a wonderful, vivid account of the whole singing of the hymn. Just before going into the garden at the end of the Last Supper, Jesus says to the company, "Let us dance." And they all hold hands in a circle, and as they circle round him, Jesus sings "Glory be to thee, Father!"

In which the circling company responds "Amen."

"Glory be to thee, Word!"

And again, "Amen."

"I would be born and I would bear."

"Amen."

"I would eat and I would be eaten!"

"Amen."

"Thou that dancest, see what I do, let mine is this passion of the manhood, which I am about to suffer!"

"Amen."

"I would flee and I would stay!"

"Amen."

"I would be united and I would unite."

"Amen."

A door am I to thee that knocketh at me. . . . A way am I to thee, a wayfarer. And when the dance is ended, he walks out into the garden to be taken and crucified.

When you go to your death that way—as a god—in the knowledge of the myth, you are going to your eternal life. So what is there in that to be sad about? Let us make it magnificent—as it is. Let us celebrate it.

MOYERS: The god of death is the lord of the dance.

CAMPBELL: The god of death is at the same time the lord of sex.

MOYERS: What do you mean?

CAMPBELL: It is amazing, one after another, you discover these gods who are at once of death and of generation. The death god, Chthon, of the Hellenic-Vedic tradition, is also the sex god. The Egyptian god Osiris was the judge and lord of the dead, and the lord of the regenerator of life. It is a basic theme—that which dies is born. You must have death in order to have life.

This is the origin of the head hunt in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia. The head hunt is a sacred act, a sacred duty. Before a young man can be permitted to marry and become a father, he must go forth and have his kill, unless there is a girl there cannot be birth. The significance of that is that every generation has to die a fear that the next generation can come. As soon as you beget a new birth to a child, you are the dead one. The child is the new life and you are simply the protector of that new life.

MOYERS: Your time has come.

CAMPBELL: That is why there is this deep psychic effect associated of begetting and dying.

MOYERS: Is there some relationship between what you are saying and the fact that a parent will give his or her life for a child?

CAMPBELL: There is a magnificent essay by Schopenhauer in which he asks, how is it that a human being can so participate in the pain or pain of another that with a thought spent no less? The virtues his own life to the other? How can it happen that what we normally think of as the first law of nature and self-preservation is suddenly dissolved?

JO: How at some four or five years ago there was an extraordinary event that represents this problem. There is a place there called the Put where the trade winds from the south come crashing down a great ridge of mountains. People like to go up there to get their hair blown about or sometimes to commit suicide. You know, something like jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge.

One day two policemen were driving up the Put road when they saw just beyond the railing that keeps the cars from falling over, a young man preparing to jump. The police car stopped, and the policeman on the right jumped out to grab the man but caught him just as he jumped, and he was killed before he got pulled over when the second cop arrived in time and pulled the two of them back.

Do you realize what had suddenly happened to that policeman who had given himself to us at a well that he knew well. Everything else in his life had dropped off, his only wish was to get to his job, his duty to his own life. All of his wishes and his past his lifetime had just disappeared. He was about to die.

Later a newspaper reporter asked him, "Why didn't you get up? You would have been killed." And his reported answer was, "I couldn't let go. If I had let that young man go, I couldn't have lived any other day of my life." How come?

Schopenhauer's answer is that such a good idea that he represents the breakthrough of a more physical realization which is that in that instant there are one, that you are two aspects of the one, he and that apparent separateness is but an effect of the way we experience forms, about the conditions of space and time. Our true reality is our identity and unity with all life. This is a metaphysical truth which may become spontaneously realized under a number of circumstances. For this according to Schopenhauer, the truth of your life.

The hero is the one who has given his physical life to some order of realization of that truth. The concept of love, your neighbor is to put you in



Kava party in
conghouse.

The head hunt is a sacred act, a sacred killing. Before a young man can be permitted to marry and become a father, he must go forth and lose his kill. Unless there is death, there cannot be birth.

tune with this fact. But whether you love your neighbor or not, when the realization grabs you, you may risk your life. That Hawaiian policeman didn't know who the young man was to whom he had given himself. Schopenhauer declares that in small ways you can see this happening every day, all the time, moving life in the world: people doing selfless things for and for each other.

MOYERS: So when Jesus says, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," he is saying in effect, "Love thy neighbor because he is yourself."

CAMPBELL: There is a beautiful figure in the Oriental traditions, the bodhisattva, whose nature is boundless compassion, and from whose fingertips there is said to drip ambrosia down to the lowest depths of hell.

MOYERS: And the meaning of that?

CAMPBELL: At the very end of the Divine Comedy, Dante realizes that the love of God informs the whole universe down to the lowest pits of hell.

That's very much the same image. The *bodhisattva* represents the principle of compassion, which is the healing principle that makes life possible. Life is pain, but compassion is what gives it the possibility of continuing. The *bodhisattva* is one who has achieved the realization of immortality yet voluntarily participates in the sorrows of the world. A voluntary participation in the world's very different from just getting in on it. That's exactly the theme of Paul's statement about Christ in his Epistle to the Philippians: that Jesus "did not think godhood something to be held to but took the form of a servant here on the earth, even to death on the cross." That's a voluntary participation in the fragmentation of life.

MYERS: So you would agree with Abelard in the twelfth century, who said that Jesus' death on the cross was not as ransom paid or as a penalty applied, but that it was an act of atonement, atonement with the race.

CAMPBELL: That's the most sophisticated interpretation of why Christ had to be crucified, or why he elected to be crucified. An earlier one was that the sin in the Garden of Eden had committed mankind to the Devil, and God had to redeem man from the powerbroker, the Devil. So he offered his own son, Jesus, as the redemption. I like Gregory giving this interpretation of Jesus as the bait that hooked the Devil. That's the redemption idea. In another version, God was so offended by the act of impudence in the Garden that he became wrathful and threw mankind out of his field of mercy, and then the only thing that could atone man with God was a sacrifice that would be as great in its importance as the sin had been. No mere man could make such a sacrifice, so the son of God himself became man in order to pay the debt.

But Abelard's idea was that Christ came to be crucified to awaken man's heart the sentiment of compassion for the suffering state, and so to remove man's mind from blind commitment to the gods of this world. It is an compassion with Christ that we turn to Christ, and the injured one becomes our Savior.

This is reflected in the medieval idea of the injured king, the Grail king, suffering from his incurable wound. The injured one again becomes the savior. It is the suffering that awakes the humanity of the human heart.

MYERS: So you would agree with Abelard that mankind yearning for God and God yearning for mankind met in compassion at that cross?

CAMPBELL: Yes. As soon as there is time, there is suffering. You can't have a future unless you have a past, and if you are not live with the present, it becomes past, whatever it is. Life, death, birth, loss, death, and so on. By contemplating the cross, you are contemplating a symbol of the mystery of life.

MYERS: That is why there is so much pain associated with the true religious transformation or conversion. It is not easy to live joyously.

CAMPBELL: The New Testament teaches dying to oneself, literally suffering, the pain of death, the world and its values. This is the vocabulary of the mystics. Now, suicide is also a dying to oneself. It casts off the psychological posture that you happen to be in at that time, so that you may come out a better one. You die to your current life in order to come to another of



**The Crucifixion,
Salvador Dalí (born
1904)**

Abelard's idea was that Christ came to be crucified to evoke in man's heart the sentiment of compassion for the suffering of life and so to remove man's mind from blind consciousness to the genius of this world. It is an communion with Christ that we turn to Christ and the injured one becomes our Saviour.



Tay Ninh, South Vietnam

During the Vietnam War, I shot on the television young men going out to rescue a companion at great risk to themselves. How can a human being so participate in the peril or pain of another that within thought, spontaneously, he sacrifices his own life? Schopenhauer says this is the breakthrough of the metaphysical realization that you and the other are one, that you are two aspects of the one life.

where the trails become so confused that you can't see your own shadow. Now that's a Christlike figure, isn't it?

CAMPBELL: Yes, it is. And here also is the labyrinth motif. The trails are deliberately confused, but if you know the secret of the labyrinth, you can go and pay its inhabitant a visit.

MOYERS: And if you have faith, you can follow Jesus.

CAMPBELL: You can very often find it true things that one learns is a member of the mystery religions that the labyrinth, which blocks us at the same time the way to eternal life. This is the final secret of myth: to teach you how to penetrate the labyrinth of life in such a way that its spiritual values come through.

That is the problem of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, too. The crisis comes in the "middle of the way of our life" when the body is beginning to fade, and another whole constellation of themes comes breaking into your dream world. Dante says that in the middle year of his life, he was lost in a dangerous wood. And he was threatened there by three animals, symbolizing pride, desire, and fear. Then Virgil, the personification of poetic insight, appeared and conducted him through the labyrinth of life, which is the place of those fixed to their desires and fears, and can't pass through to eternity. Dante was carried through to the beatific vision of God. On a smaller scale, in this Pima Indian story, we have the same mythological image. The Pima Indians were among the simplest Indian cultures in North America. And here they have in their own way made use of this tragically sophisticated image, which matches Dante.

As a result, we have better than the usual difference between the number of species and the number of genera, and the number of families and the number of orders. It is only in the case of the plants and the animals in China that the numbers of the families are more than double the number of the genera, and the number of the orders is more than double the number of the families.²¹

[illegible][illegible]

But what if preparing for a social science exam is a negative experience for you? The Secret is to put the preparation down and write a caution sentence that says "I am putting everything down and am not in a hurry to do so." Then, if you have written "Forward has caught up to me," I advise that the Secret show structure all. You must see clearly that the work is really what you have to do. You can have a choice. So, if you are a student and see how much of your study is negative, the great secret will be to remember to look at the

soon. This idea is an essential one in relation to the paradoxology of mortality and the values of life.

So I said to myself, Well, get this straight: what Joyce is talking about. So I wrote it down in my Joyce notebook. "Room" is Chapter I, verse 32. Can you imagine my surprise? There was that same number again: 1, 32, right out of the *David Byrne*? Joyce had taken that period of the Christian faith as the motto of the greatest masterpiece of his life. And there he describes ruthlessly the depths of the private and public monstrosities of human life and action in the ordinary course of a man's history. It's there—told with love.

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MOYERS: Can Westerners grasp the mystical experience that leaves the logic behind? If we're allowed to the mystic, to God in a culture where science determines your perceptions of reality, how can you experience the ultimate ground that the shamans talk about?

AMFIBELL: We like people's experience of those in the Middle Ages who experienced it were usually normal as far as we know. One of the great heresies in the West is the heresy that Christ pronounced when he said, "I and the Father are one." He was crucified for saying that. In the Middle Ages, nine hundred years after Christ, a great Sufi mystic said, "I and my beloved are one," and he too was crucified. As he was going to the cross, he prayed, "O my Lord, if you had taught these people what you have taught me, they would not be doing this to me. And if you had not taught me, this would not be happening to me. Blessed is the Lord and all his works." Another of the Sufi mystics said, "The function of the orthodox community is to give the mystic his desire, which is a union with God, through martyrdom and death."

MOYERS: What has undercut this experience today?

CAMPBELL: It's characteristic of democracy that majority rule is understood as being effective not only in politics but also in everything. In thinking of course, the majority is always wrong.

MOYERS: Always wrong?

CAMPBELL: In matters of this kind, yes. The majority's function is to restrain the spirit's to try to succeed and to open up to someone who's had an experience beyond that of good, shelter, property, and wealth.

Have you ever read Sinclair Lewis' *Babbalanza*?

MOYERS: Not in a long time.

CAMPBELL: Remember the last line? "I have never done the thing that I wanted to in all my life." That is a man who never believed in himself. Well, I actually heard that line when I was teaching at Sarah Lawrence. Before I was married, I used to eat out in the restaurants, I went for my lunch and dinners. Thursday night was the maid's night in Bronxville, so that many of the families were out in restaurants. One time even I was in my favorite restaurant there, and at the next table there was a father, a mother, and a scrawny boy about twelve years old. The father said to the boy, "Drink your tomato juice."

And the boy said, "I don't want to."

Then the father, with a kinder voice, said, "Drink your tomato juice."
And the mother said, "Don't make him do what he doesn't want to do."
The father looked at her and said, "He can't go through life doing what he wants to do. It is not only what he wants to do, he has to *be* doing. Look at me. I've never done a thing I wanted to in all my life."

And I thought, "My God, there's a Babbitt incarnate!"

That's the man who never followed his bliss. You may have a success in life, but this is just the mark of it, which is that it is *not* what you *did* want. You've never done the thing you wanted to do in all your life. I always tell my students to *follow your body and soul when to go*. When you have the feeling, then stay with it, and don't let anyone throw you off.

MOYERS: What happens when you follow your bliss?

CAMPBELL: You come to bliss in the Middle Ages, a worse image that occurs in many many contexts is the wheel of fortune. There's the hub of the wheel, and there's the new life, the rim of the wheel. For example, if you are attached to the rim of the wheel of fortune, you will be either above going down or then bottoming out and going up. But you are at a hub, you are in the same place, the center. That is the sense of the marriage vow. I take you in health or sickness, in wealth or poverty, going up or going down. But I take you as my center, and you are my bliss, not the wealth that you might bring me in the social prestige, not yet. That's the meaning of your bliss.

MOYERS: How would you advise somebody to tap that spring of eternal life, that bliss that is right there?

CAMPBELL: We're having experiences all the time which may on occasion render some sense of this as the direction of where you're going. Gosh, it's no one can tell you what it's going to be. You have to learn to recognize your own depth.

MOYERS: When did you know yours?

CAMPBELL: Oh, when I was a kid, I never let anybody put me off. Of course, my family helped me all the time, just not in the right way, really deeply, in a wonderful way. I didn't even realize there was a problem.

MOYERS: How can these parents who are parents help our children recognize their bliss?

CAMPBELL: You have to know yourself and be attentive to the child. You can help. When I taught Thomas Lawrence, I would give an individual conference with every one of my students at least once a fortnight, for a half hour or so. Now, if you're talking about the things that students ought to be reading, and suddenly you're talking something that the student really responds to, you can see the eyes open and the ears relax and change. The possibility has opened there. All you can say to yourself is, "I hope this eye is hanging on to that. They may not know it but when they do, they have found life right there in the room with them."

MOYERS: And one doesn't have to be a poet to do this.

CAMPBELL: Poets are simply those who have made a profession and a lifestyle of being in touch with the bliss. Most people are concerned with other things. They get themselves involved in economic and political



*The Wheel of Fortune,
France, fourteenth
century*

*If you are attached to the
rim of the wheel of fortune,
you will be either above
going down or at the bottom
coming up. But if you are at
the hub, you are in the same
place all the time, centered*

activities, or get drafted into a war that isn't the one they're interested in, and it may be difficult to negotiate this world under those circumstances. That is a technique each one has to work out for himself somehow.

But most people living in that realm of what might be called occasional concerns have the capacity that is waiting to be awakened to move to this other field. I know it, I have seen it happen in students.

When I taught in a boys' prep school, I used to talk to the boys who were trying to make up their minds as to what their careers were going to be. A boy would come to me and ask, "Do you think I can do this? Do you think I can do that? Do you think I can be a writer?"

"Oh," I would say, "I don't know. Can you endure ten years of disappointment with nobody responding to you, or are you thinking that you are going to write a best seller the first crack? If you have the guts to go with the thing you really want, no matter what happens, well, go ahead."

Then Dad would come along and say, "No, you ought to study law because there is more money in that you know. Now that is the rim of the wheel, not the hub, not following your bliss. Are you going to think of fortune, or are you going to think of your bliss?"

I came back from Europe as a student in 1929, just three weeks before the Wall Street crash, so I didn't have a job for two years. There just wasn't a job. That was a great time for me.

MOYERS: A premonition? The depth of the expression. What a wonderful abuse of it?

CAMPBELL: I am not too poor. I just like that. I don't have any money. People were so good to each other at that time. For example, I lived with Fr. Henry. Suddenly he left me, and I had to read everything Fr. Henry had written. So I simply wrote to a bookstore near that I was known in New York City, and they sent me these books and I did not have to pay for them until I got a job—four years later.

There was a wonderful old man up in Woodstock, New York, who had a piece of property with these little chicken coops, and he would rent out for twenty dollars a year or so to any young person he thought might have a future in the arts. There was no running water, so I had to dig a well and a pump. He felt sure he would install running water, because he didn't like the class of people it attracted. That is where I did most of my basic reading and work. I was grateful. I was following my bliss.

Now I come to the Sikereses, because in Sanskrit, which is the great spiritual language of the world, there are three terms that represent the path: the pumping out of the ego, the ego in its transparency. So what Ananda means is bliss or rapture. I thought, "I do not know whether my consciousness is properly conscious of itself, but I do know whether what I know of my being is my proper being. I don't. But I do know where my rapture is. So at my being, at my proper being, and that will bring me to my consciousness and my being." I think it worked.

MOYERS: Do we ever know the truth? Do we ever find it?

CAMPBELL: Each person can have his own depth, experience, and some criterion of being in touch with his own such ananda, his own being through consciousness and bliss. The religious people tell us we really won't experience bliss until we die and go to heaven. But I believe in having as much as you can of this experience while you are still alive.

MOYERS: Bliss is now.

CAMPBELL: In heaven you will be having such a miracle as time looking at God that you won't get your own experience at all. That is not the price to have the experience—here is the place to have it.

MOYERS: Do you ever have this sense when you feel the being of bliss as I have at moments, of being helped by hidden hands?

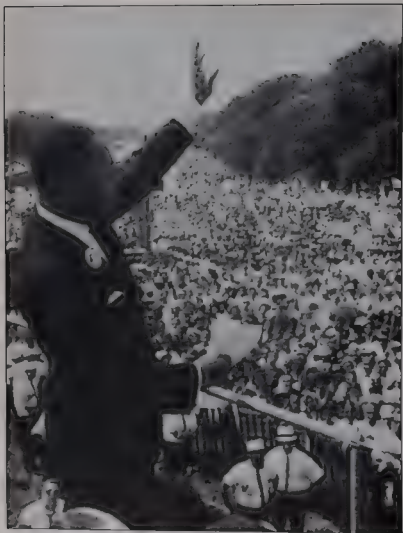
CAMPBELL: All the time. It is miraculous. I even have a superstition that has grown on me as the result of my subjective consciousness of the time name you told me you had. You put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while waiting for you, and the life that you seek it to be living is the one you are living. When you can see that you begin to meet people who are in the field of your bliss, and they open the doors to you. I say it flow your bliss and don't be afraid, and doors will open where you didn't know they were going to be.

MOYERS: Have you ever had sympathy for the man who has no visible means of support?

CAMPBELL Who has no visible means. Yes, he is the one that evokes compassion, the poor chap. To see him stumbling around when all the waters of life are right there really evokes one's pity.

MOYERS The waters of eternal life are right there? Where?

CAMPBELL Wherever you are—if you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time.





THE HERO'S ADVENTURE

Furthermore, we have not even to risk the adventure alone for the heroes of all time have gone before us. The labyrinth is thoroughly known. We have only to follow the thread of the hero path, and where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god. And where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves. Where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our own existence. And where we had thought to be alone, we will be with all the world.

—JOSEPH CAMPBELL



MOYERS: Why are there so many stories of the hero in mythology?

CAMPBELL: Because that's what's worth writing about. Even in popular novels, the main character is a hero or heroine who has found or done something beyond the normal range of achievement and experience. A hero is someone who has given his or her life a meaning bigger than at first.

MOYERS: So in all of these cultures, whatever the local costume the hero might be wearing, what is the deed?

CAMPBELL: Well, there are two types of deed. One is the physical deed, in which the hero performs a courageous act in battle or saves a life. The other kind is the spiritual deed, in which the hero learns to experience the supernatural range of human spiritual life and then comes back with a message.

The usual hero adventure begins with someone from whom something has been taken, or who feels there's something lacking in the normal experiences available. It's permitted to take members of his society. This person then takes off on a series of adventures beyond the ordinary, either to recover what has been lost or to discover something of great value. It's usually a cycle, a going and a returning.

RACING TALE

Martin L. King, Jr.,
1963

A hero is someone who has given his or her life a meaning bigger than himself.

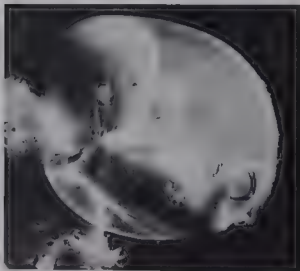
But the structure and symbolism of the spiritual sense of this adventure can be seen already anticipated in the puberty or infantile rituals of early tribal societies, through which a child is compelled to give up childishhood and become an adult. To do, you might say, to transform personality and psyche and come back as a responsible adult. This is a fundamental psychological transformation that everyone has to undergo. We are in childhood in a condition of dependence, under someone's protection and supervision for some thirteen to twenty-five years—and if you're going on for a Ph.D., this may continue to perhaps thirty five. You are in no way a self-responsible free agent, but an obedient dependent, expecting and receiving punishments and rewards. To escape out of this position of psychological immaturity is the courage of self-responsibility and assurance, requires a death and a resurrection. That's the basic motif of the universal hero's journey—leaving one condition and finding the source of life, bringing you forth into a richer or mature condition.

MURKS: So even if we happen not to be heroes in the grand sense of redeeming society, we still have to make that journey inside ourselves, spiritually and psychologically.

CAMPBELL: That's right. Otto Rank in his important little book *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* declares that everyone is a hero in birth, where he undergoes a tremendous psychological as well as physical transformation from the condition of a "little water creature" living in a realm of amniotic

FEELS

Now Rank declares that everyone is a hero in birth, where he undergoes a tremendous transformation from the condition of a little water creature living in a realm of amniotic fluid, into an air-breathing mammal which ultimately will be standing.





Birth.

Giving birth is definitely a heroic deed in that it is the giving over of oneself to the life of another.

And into an a-breathing mammal with a full mouth will be standing. That's an enormous transformation, and had it been otherwise, undertaken, it would have been indeed a heroic act. And there was a heroic act on the mother's part, as well, who had brought this all about.

MOYERS: Then heroes are not all men?

CAMPBELL: Oh no. The male usually has the more conspicuous role just because of the conditions of life. He's out there in the world, and the woman is in the home. But among the Aetaceans, for example, who had a number of heavens to which people's souls would be assigned according to the conditions of their death, the heaven for warriors killed in battle was the same for mothers who died in childbirth. Giving birth is definitely a heroic deed in that it is the giving over of oneself to the life of another.

MOYERS: Didn't you think we've lost that trait in this society of ours, where it's deemed more than to go out into the world and make a lot of money than it is to raise children?

CAMPBELL: Making money gets more advertisement. You know the old saying: If a dog bites a man, that's not a story, but if a man bites a dog, you've got a story there. So the thing that happens and happens and happens, no matter how heroic it may be, isn't news. Motherhood has lost its novelty, you might say.

MOYERS: That's a wonderful image through the mother as hero.

CAMPBELL: It has always seemed so to me. That's something I learned from reading these myths.

MOYERS: It's a journey—you have to move out of the known, conventional safety of your life to undertake this.

CAMPBELL: You have to be transformed from a maiden to a mother. That's a big change, involving many dangers.

MOYERS: And when you come back to my sister—my wife with the child, you've brought something for the world.

CAMPBELL: Not only that, you've got the job ahead of you. But Rans makes the point that there's a world of people who think that the hero is acting by being born, qualifies them for the respect and support of the entire community.

MOYERS: But there's still a journey to be taken after that.

CAMPBELL: There's a large journey to be taken, of many trials.

MOYERS: What's the significance of the trials and tests and ordeals of the hero?

CAMPBELL: If you want to put it in terms of intentions, the trials are designed to see that the intending hero is really a hero. Is he really a match for this task? Can he overcome the dangers? Does he have the courage, the knowledge, the capacity to enable him to serve?

MOYERS: In this picture of easy religion, cheaply achieved, it seems to me we've forgotten that it takes a great religion to reach that the trials of the hero journey are a significant part of life, that there's no reward without renunciation, without paying the price. The hero says, "Oh, you think that you can enter the Garden of Bliss without such trials as came to those who passed before you?" And Jesus said, in the gospel of Matthew, "Great is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and how few there be who find it." And the heroes—the Jewish tradition—undergo great tests before they arrive at their redemption.

CAMPBELL: If you realize what the real problem is—losing yourself, giving yourself to some higher end, to something other—you realize that this itself is the ultimate trial. When we get thinking primarily about ourselves and our own self-preservation, we undergo a truly heroic transformation of consciousness.

And what all the myths have to deal with is this transformation of consciousness of one kind to another. You have been thinking one way, you now have to think a different way.

MOYERS: How is consciousness transformed?

CAMPBELL: Either by the trials themselves or by illuminating revelations. Trials and revelations are what it's all about.

MOYERS: Isn't there a moment of redemption in all of these stories? The woman is saved from the dragon, the city is spared from extermination, the hero is snatched from danger in the nick of time.

CAMPBELL: Well, yes. There would be no hero deed unless there were an achievement. We can use the hero who fails, but the success is represented as a kind of crown, the pretension to more than he can achieve.

MOYERS: How is a hero different from a leader?

CAMPBELL: That is a problem Tolstoy dealt with in *War and Peace*. Here you have Napoleon ravaging Europe and now about to invade Russia, and Tolstoy raises this question: Is the leader really a leader, or is he simply the one out in front on a wave? In psychological terms, the leader might be analyzed as the one who perceived what could be achieved and did it.

MOYERS: It has been said that a leader is someone who'd scorned the measurable and got in front of it. Napoleon was a leader, but he wasn't a hero in the sense that what he accomplished was grand for humanity's sake. It was for France, the glory of France.

CAMPBELL: Then he is a French hero, is he not? This is the problem for today: Is the hero of a given state or people what we need today, when the whole planet should be our field of concern? Napoleon is the nineteenth-century counterpart of Hitler in the twentieth. Napoleon's ravaging of Europe was horrific.

MOYERS: So you could be a local god and try the test on a larger cosmic level?

CAMPBELL: Yes. Or you could be a local god, but for the people whom that local god conquered, you could be the enemy. Whether you call someone a hero or a monster is a relative to where the locus of your consciousness may be.

MOYERS: So we have to be careful not to call a deed heroic when, in a larger, mythological sense, it simply doesn't work that way.

CAMPBELL: Well, I don't know. The deed could be absolutely a heroic deed—a person giving his life for his own people, for example.

MOYERS: Ah, yes. The German soldier who dies—

CAMPBELL: is as much a hero as the American who was sent over there to kill him.

MOYERS: So does heroism have a moral objective?

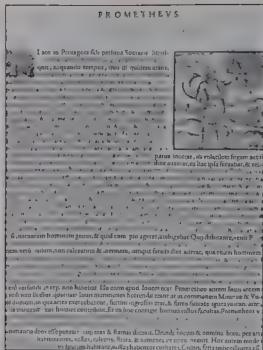
CAMPBELL: The moral objective is that of saving a people, or saving a person, or supporting an idea. The hero sacrifices himself for something—that's the morality of it. Now, from another position, of course, you might say that the idea for which he sacrificed himself was something that should not have been respected. That's a judgment from the other side, but it doesn't destroy the intrinsic heroism of the deed performed.

MOYERS: That's a different angle on heroes from what I got as a young boy, when I read the story of Prometheus going after fire and bringing it back, benefiting humanity and suffering for it.

CAMPBELL: Yes, Prometheus brings fire to mankind and consequently civilization. The fire theft, by the way, is a universal mythic theme. Often, it's a trickster animal or bird that steals the fire and then passes it along to a relay team of birds or animals who run with it. Sometimes the animals are burned by the flames as they pass the fire along, and this is said to account for their different colorings. The fire theft is a very popular worldwide story.

MOYERS: The people in each culture are trying to explain where fire came from?

The fire-chef is a universal mythic theme. Prometheus brings fire to mankind and consequently civilization.



was on quest, going in quest of a boon, a vision, which has the same form in every mythology. That is the thing that I tried to present in the first book I wrote, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. All these different mythologies give us the same essential quest. You leave the world that you're in and go into a depth or into a distance or up to a height. There you come to what was missing in your conscious mind in the world you'd formerly inhabited. Then comes the problem either of staying with that and letting the world drop off, or returning with that boon and trying to introduce it as you move back into your social world again. That's not an easy thing to do.

MOYERS: So, the hero goes for something, he doesn't just go along for the ride, he's not simply an adventurer?

AMFEL: There are two kinds of heroes, some that choose to undertake the journey and some that don't. In one kind of adventure, the hero sets out responsibly and intentionally to perform the deed. For instance, Odysseus, son of Laertes, was told by Athena, Goddess of War, that his father's quest is a major heroic adventure for young people. That is the adventure of finding what your career is, what your nature is, what your source is. You undertake that intentionally, or there is the legend of the Sumerian sky goddess, Inanna, who descended into the underworld and underwent death to bring her beloved back to life.

Then there are adventures into which you are thrown—for example, being drafted into the army. You didn't intend it, but you're now. You've undergone a death and resurrection, you've put on a uniform, and you're another creature.

One kind of hero that often appears in Celtic myths is the prince-y hunter, who has followed the lure of a deer into a ringed forest that he has never been in before. The animal there undergoes a transformation, becoming the Queen of the Faerie Hills or something of that kind. This is a type of adventure in which the hero has not known what he is doing but suddenly finds himself in a transformed realm.

MOYERS: Is the adventurer who takes that kind of trip a hero in the mythological sense?

AMFEL: Yes, because he's always ready for it. In these stories the adventure that the hero's ready for is the one he gets. The adventure is symbolically a mythologization of his character. Even the landscape and the conditions of the environment match his readiness.

MOYERS: In George Lucas's *Star Wars*, Bob Fegans as a mercenary and ends up a hero, coming in at the last to save Luke Skywalker.

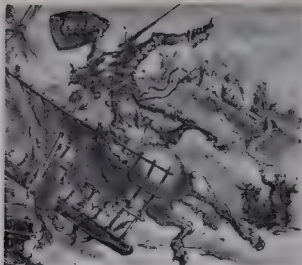
AMFEL: Yes. Then Soa has done the hard act of sacrificing himself for another.

MOYERS: Do you think that a hero is created out of guilt? Was Soa guilty because he had abandoned Skywalker?

AMFEL: It depends on what system of ideas you want to apply. Soa was a very practical guy, at least as he thought of himself, a mercenary. But he was a compassionate human being at the same time and did not know it. The adventure evoked a quality of his character that he hadn't known he possessed.

Don Quixote.

Don Quixote rode out to encounter giants, but instead of giants, his environment produced windmills. This mechanistic environment is no longer spiritually responsive to the hero.



MOYERS So perhaps the hero looks in each case to know what he knows we don't know it?

AMERICA: Our hero looks out at the world and says, "I see a giant." He sees himself as you go on. That's why it's good to be able to put yourself in situations that will make you feel that you're not alone and lower the odds as not into temptation.¹

Ortega y Gasset talks about the character of the hero in his *Mediations of Don Quixote*. Don Quixote was the subject of the Middle Ages. He rode out to encounter giants, but instead of giants, his environment produced windmills. Ortega y Gasset said that the story makes place, "not the time that a mechanical interpretation of the world, and in so doing, the environment was no longer spiritually responsive to the hero." The hero is today missing a spiritualist hand with that is in no way responsive to his spiritual need.

MOYERS A windmill

AMERICA: Yes, but Quixote said he was a knight-errant, a knight-errant, a knight-errant who had just transformed the giants into windmills. You can do that too, if you have a poetic imagination. Earlier, though, it was not a mechanistic world, it was the hero's world, but a world that was not responsive to his spiritual need. Now it has been put to such an extent that every mechanistic world is interpreted

through the physical sciences, Marxist sociology, and behavioristic psychology, that we're nothing but a predictable pattern of wires responding to stimuli. This nineteenth-century interpretation has squashed the freedom of the human will out of modern life.

MOYERS: In the practical sense, is there a danger that these myths of heroes teach us to look at the deeds of others as if we were in an amphitheater or coliseum or a movie, watching others perform great deeds while considering ourselves to be impotent?

CAMPBELL: I think this is something that has overtaken us only recently in this culture. The one who watches athletic games instead of participating in athletics is involved in a significant movement. But when you think about what people are actually undergoing in our civilization, you realize it's a very great thing to be a modern human being. The drudgery of the lives of most of the people who have to support families—well, that's the extraordinary thing.

MOYERS: But I think I would take that to the pagans of the twelfth century and the fourteenth century—

CAMPBELL: The trouble is life was much more active than ours. We sit in offices. It's significant that in our civilization the problem of the middle-aged is conspicuous.

MOYERS: You're beginning to get personal!

CAMPBELL: I'm beyond middle age, so I know a little bit about that. Something that's characteristic of a sedentary life is that there's a steady but intellectual excitement, but the body's not in it very much. So you have to engage intentionally in machanical exercises, the daily gym and so forth. I find it very difficult to enjoy such things, but there it is. Otherwise your whole body says to you, "Look, you've forgotten me entirely. I'm becoming just a clogged stream."

MOYERS: Still, it's false to me that these stories of heroes could become sort of a tranquilizer, making in us the bourgeois passivity of watching instead of acting. And the other side of it is that our world seems drained of spiritual values. It's pretty important to me that's the curse of modern society: the impotence, the ennui that people feel, the alienation of people from the world interior and the world. Maybe we need some men who will give voice to our deeper longing.

CAMPBELL: This is exactly T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* that you are describing, a suchly cal stagnation of mankind, lives and living that has settled upon us, and that makes nothing of our spiritual life, our potentialities, and even our physical courage. With it, of course, it gets us into one of its inhuman wars.

MOYERS: You're not against technology, are you?

CAMPBELL: Not at all. When Daedalus was taken by thought of as the master technician of most ancient times, people always believed he made up his son Icarus so that he might fly out of and escape from the Cretan labyrinth which he himself had invented, he said to him, "Fly the middle way. A little too high and the sun will melt the wax on your wings, and you

will fail. Don't fly too low, or the trees will swallow you. Don't fly too high. The wax melts, and the boy falls into the sea. For some reason, people talk more about Icarus than about Daedalus, as though the woe of himself was had been responsible for the young warrior's fall. But that is no case against mystery and science. For Icarus fell into the water, but Daedalus was the one who flew the magic wings successfully, getting to the other shore.

A Hindu text says, "A dangerous path, it runs like the edge of a razor." This is a metaphor that occurs in medieval literature as well. When Lancelet goes to rescue Guinevere from captivity, he has to cross a stream on a sword's edge with his bare hands and feet, yet must fly underneath. When you are doing something that is a brand new adventure, breaking new ground, whether it's something like a technological breakthrough, or simply a way of living that is new, what the community can help you with, they're always the danger of too much enthusiasm, of neglecting certain practical details. Then you fall off. "A dangerous path is this." When you follow the path of your desire and enthusiasm and ambition, keep your head in the effort, and don't let it pull you compulsively into disaster.

MOYERS: One of the intriguing paradoxes of your scholarship is that you would not believe science and mythology conflict.

CAMPBELL: No, they don't conflict. Science is breaking through now into the mystery dimensions. It's pushed itself onto the sphere the myth is talking about. It's come to the edge.

MOYERS: The edge being—

CAMPBELL: The edge, the interface between what can be known and what is never to be discovered because it's a mystery that transcends all human research. The source of life, what's it? No one knows. We don't even know what in atoms, whether it's a wave or a particle, it is both. We don't have any idea of what these things are.

That's the reason we speak of the divine. There's a transcendence, energy source. When the physicist observes subatomic particles, he's seeing a trace on a screen. These traces come and go, come and go, and we come and go, and all of these things are going. That energy is the informing energy of all things. Mythic worship is addressed to that.

MOYERS: Do you have a favorite mythic hero?

CAMPBELL: When I was young, I had two heroes. One was Don Quixote. He thinks the other was Columbus. So I took a synthetic one, a synthesis of the two. Today, I don't have a single hero at all.

MOYERS: Does our society?

CAMPBELL: It has. It has the Christ. And then America had, well, like Washington and Jefferson and, later, men like Franklin D. Roosevelt. But today is so complex, and it's changing so fast, that there is no time for anything to constellate itself before it's thrown over again.

MOYERS: We seem to worship celebrities today, not heroes.

CAMPBELL: Yes, and that's too bad. A question that was once asked at the end of the high school in Brookline which asked, "What would you



Daedalus and Icarus.

People talk more about Icarus than about Daedalus, as though the wings themselves had been responsible for the young astronomer's fall. But that is no case against industry and science. Poor Icarus fell into the water—but Daedalus, who flew the middle way, succeeded in getting to the other shore.

like to be?" Two thirds of the students responded, "A celebrity." They had no notion of having to give of themselves in order to achieve something.

MOYERS: Just to be known.

CAMPBELL: Just to be known is to have fame—name and fame. It's not bad.

MOYERS: But does a society need heroes?

CAMPBELL: Yes, I think so.

MOYERS: Why?

CAMPBELL: Because it has to make constellating images to pull together all these tendencies to separation, to pull them together into a new orientation.

MOYERS: To follow some path.

CAMPBELL: I think so. The nation has to have an intention somehow to operate as a single power.

MOYERS: What did you think of the outpouring over John Lennon's death? Was he a hero?

CAMPBELL: Oh, he definitely was a hero.

MOYERS: Explain that in the mythological sense.

CAMPBELL: In the mythological sense, he was an innovator. The Beatles brought forth an art form for which there was a readiness. Somehow, they were in perfect tune with the time. Had they turned up thirty years before, their music would have tried out. The public hero is sensitive to the needs of his time. The Beatles brought a new spiritual depth into popular music, which started the fading of calls for meditation and Oriental music. Oriental music had been over here for years, as a curiosity, but now, after the Beatles, our young people seem to know what it's about. We are hearing more and more of it, and it's being used in terms of its original intention as a support for meditations. That's what the Beatles started.

MOYERS: Sometimes it seems to me that we ought to feel pity for the hero instead of admiration. So many of them have sacrificed their own needs for others.

CAMPBELL: They all have.

MOYERS: And very often what they accomplish is shattered by the inability of the followers to see.

CAMPBELL: Yes, you come out of the forest with gold and it turns to ashes. That's a well-known fairy-tale motif.

MOYERS: There's that haunting incident in the story of Odysseus, when the ship tears apart and the members of the crew are thrown overboard, and the waves toss Odysseus over. He clings to a mast and finally lands on shore, and the text says, "Alone at last, Alone at last."

CAMPBELL: Well, that adventure of Odysseus is a little compacted to try to talk about very briefly. But that particular adventure where the ship is wrecked is at the end of the journey—that's the end of the highest illumination.

If the ship had not been wrecked, Odysseus might have remained on the island and become *you might say* the sort of *you* who, on each evening, an enlightenment remains there in Ithaca and never returns. But the Greek idea of making the values known and enacted in life brings him back. Now there was a taboo on the island of the Sun, namely, that one should not kill and eat any of the oxen of the Sun. Odysseus' men, however, were hungry, so they slaughtered the cattle of the Sun, which is what brought about their shipwreck. The *lower consciousness* was still a factor in what they were up to there in the sphere of the highest spiritual light. When you're in the presence of such an illumination, you are not to think. *Go, I'm hungry.* Get me a roast beef sandwich. "Odysseus' men were not ready or eligible for the experience which had been given to them."

That's a model story of the earthly hero's attaining to the highest illumination but then coming back.

MOYERS: What are we to make of what you wrote of the bittersweet story of Odysseus when you said, "The tragic sense of that work lies precisely in its deep joy in life's beauty and excellence, the noble love-ness of fair woman, the real worth of manly men. Yet the end of the tale is ashes."

CAMPBELL: You can't say it's useless because it ends in the grave. There's an inspiring Iliad in one of Pindar's poems where he is celebrating a young man who has just won a wrestling championship at the Pythian games. Pindar writes, "Great ones of a day, what's anyone? What is he not? Man is but a dream, it's a shadow. Yet when there comes as a gift of heaven a gleam of sunshine, there rests upon man a radiant light and awe, a gentle life. That dismaying song, 'Vain, vain, vain, is vanity,' is a story of vanity. This moment itself is no vanity, it is a triumph, a delight. This accent on the culmination of perfection in our moments of triumph is very Greek."

MOYERS: Don't many of the heroes in mythology die to the world? They suffer, they're crucified.

CAMPBELL: Many of them give their lives. But then the myth also says that out of the given life comes a new life. It may not be the hero's life but it's a new life, a new way of being or becoming.

MOYERS: These stories of the hero vary from culture to culture. Is the hero from the East different from the hero in our culture?

CAMPBELL: It's the degree of the manifestation of action that makes them different. There is a typical early culture hero who goes around slaying monsters. Now, that's a form of adventure from the period of prehistory when man was shaping his world out of a dangerous, unshaped wilderness. He goes about killing monsters.

MOYERS: So the hero evolves over time like most other concepts and ideas?

CAMPBELL: He evolves as the culture evolves. Moses is a hero figure, for example. He ascends the mountain, he meets with Yahweh on the summit of the mountain, and he comes back with rules for the formation of a whole new society. That's a typical hero act, a departure in brilliant return.

MOYERS: Is Buddha a hero figure?



Moses, Marc Chagall
(1887–1985).

Moses ascends the mountain, he meets with Yahweh on the summit, and he comes back with rules for the formation of a whole society. That's a typical hero act—departure, fulfillment, return.

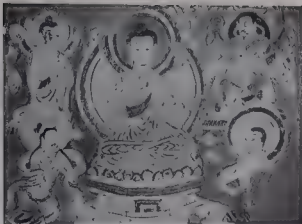
AM BELL The Buddha follows a path very much like that of Christ, only of course the Buddha lived two hundred years earlier. You can match those two savior figures right down the line, even to the roles and characters of the immediate disciples or apostles. You can parallel, for example, Ananda and St. Peter.

MAYERS Why did you call your book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*?

CAMPBELL Because there is a certain typical human sequence of functions which can be detected in stories from all over the world and from many periods of history. Essentially it might even be said there is but one archetypal mythic hero, whose life has been replicated in many kinds by many, many people. A legendary hero is usually the founder of something, the founder of a new age, the founder of a new religion, the founder of a new city, the founder of a new way of life. In order to found something new, one has to leave the old and go in quest of the seed, like a germinal idea that will have the potentiality of bringing forth that new thing.

The founders of religions have gone on quests like that. The Buddha went into the desert and then sat beneath the bodhi tree, the tree of immortal knowledge, where he received an illumination that has enlightened all of Asia for twenty-five hundred years.

After baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus went into the desert for forty days, and it was out of that desert that he came with his message. Moses went to the top of a mountain and came down with the tablets of the law. That's you, the one who founds a new city, a most of the old Greek cities were founded by heroes who went off on quests and had surprising adventures, all of which each then founded a city. You might also say that the founder of a life, your better life, the life of new lives, instead of imitating everybody else's life—comes from a quest as well.



A. *Buddha with Four Disciples, India.*

B. *The Supper at Emmaus, Jacopo da Pontormo (1494–1557).*

The Buddha follows a path very close to that of Christ, only of course the Buddha lived five hundred years earlier. You can match these two Savior figures right down the line, even to the roles and characters of their immediate disciples.



MOORE: Why are these stories so important to the human race?

AMERICK: It depends on what kind of story it is. If the story represents what might be called an archetypal adventure—the story of a child becoming a youth or the awakening to the new world that opens at adolescence—it would help to provide a model for navigating this development.

MOORE: You talk about how stories help us through crises. When I read there is a child, they all had happy endings. It was a time before I learned that life's straight with plodding and decent, unvaried realities. Sometimes I think we buy a ticket to comfort and Soliman, and when we go into the theater we find the plays by Harold Pinter. Moore fairy tales make us mutants to reality.

AMERICK: Fairy tales are told for entertainment. You've got to distinguish between the myths that have to do with the serious matter of living—in terms of the order of society and of nature—and stories with some of those same motifs that are told for entertainment. But even though there's a happy ending for most fairy tales—in the way to the happy ending, especially myth-fairy motifs, we start out examining the motif of being in deep trouble and then hearing a voice or having somebody come to help you out.

Fairy tales are for children. Very often they're about a little girl who doesn't want to grow up to be a woman. At the crisis of that threshold crossing she's talking. So she goes to sleep and the prince comes through all the barriers and gives her a reason to think it might be nice on the other side of the threshold. Many of the common tales represent the little girl who is stuck. And of these dragon kingdoms and threshold crossings I've tried, with getting past being stuck.

The images of primitive initiation ceremonies are—1) mythologically grounded and have to do with killing the infantile ego and bringing forth an adult, whether it's the boy or the girl; it's harder for the boy than for the girl because he overtakes the girl. She becomes a woman whether she intends it or not, but the little boy has to intend to be a man. At the first menstruation, the girl is a woman. The next thing she knows, she's pregnant, she's a mother. The boy first has to encourage himself in his mother, get his energy into himself, and then start forth. That's what the myth of Young Man going and your father is all about. In the *Gospels*, Jesus Christ lives with his mother. When he's twenty years old, Athena comes and says, Go and your father. That is the theme—go, through the stories. Sometimes it's a mystical father, but sometimes it's here in the *Odyssey*, it's the physical father.

A fairy tale is the child's myth. There are proper myths for proper times of life. As you grow older, you need a different mythology. Of course, the whole story of the civilization, which is a fundamental image in the Christian tradition, speaks of the coming of eternity into the here and time and space, where there is disorder, ferment. But it also speaks of the passage from the field of time and space into the here and eternal to. So we cannot out-temper and out-robust ourselves in membership and through that and smothering enter the spiritual sphere which transcends all the pains of earth. There's a form of the crucifixion as Christ triumphing, where he is not with his head bowed, one foot pointing from him, but with his erect and eyes open, as though he were coming a little farther to the crucifixion. So

Augustine has written somewhat that it is to write the action as if directed to his bride.

MOYERS: So there are truths that order are and things that order.

CAMPBELL: Oh, yes. I remember the time the archbishop Zumbi was lecturing at a club in the Lincoln Center. He's a dramatic character, that old's moral illusion. After his lecture, a young woman came up to him and said, "Mr. Zumbi, that was a wonderful lecture so I'll try and say it. But maybe—I don't get it—it doesn't speak to me."

Oh, he said, "don't be impatient. That's not for you yet, darling. And so it is, when you get older, and I've seen you've known, in time, you've loved for his passed away, and the world itself is passing, the master myth comes in. But for young people, the world's something yet to be created and dealt with and loved and learned from, and that's with the old and another mythology.

MOYERS: The writer Thomas Berry says that it's all a quest, a story. The story is the plot we assign to life, and the universe, a historic, metaphysical, and fundamental beliefs as to how things work. He says we are in trouble now, because we're in between stories. The old story's still going, still going time, it's shaped our emotions, our lives, it provided us with a sense of purpose, of energy, of actions, it consecrated suffering, it ended calamities. We awake in the morning and know who we were, we could answer the questions of our existence. Everything was in a state of because the story was there. Now the story is not functioning. And we have not yet come to a new.

CAMPBELL: I'm in part in agreement with that, sort of, because there is an old story that is true, good, and that's the story of the spiritual quest. The quest to find the inward thing that you know, by the way, the story that I tried to render in that little book, "I was written forty odd years ago. The Hero with a Thousand Faces. The relationship of myth to consciousness and we could have gone to what I mean, become used to the new world that it is in. The world's different really from what it was fifty years ago. But the inward life of man is exactly the same. So if we put us as far away from the myth of the origin of the world, scientists will tell you what that is, anyway, and go back to the method what is the mythos, what are its stages of reality, what are the roots of the transition from childhood to maturity, and what does maturity mean, the story is there, is it's a different region.

The story of Jesus, for example, that's a universal, and I've used represented in the story. Jesus first he goes to the challenge of the seriousness of his time when he goes to John the Baptist to be baptized. Then he goes past the temptation in the desert for forty days. In the lowest condition, the number forty's magic, and it's significant. The children of Israel spent forty years in the wilderness, Jesus spent forty days in the desert, in the desert, Jesus underwent three temptations, first there was the economic temptation, where the Devil comes to him and says, "You look hungry, young man! Why not change these stones to bread?" And Jesus replies, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth." And then next we have the sexual temptation, Jesus is taken to the top of a mountain and shown the kingdoms of the world, and he says to him, "You are offered all these kingdoms down to me, which is a common

is to be of several volumes. I want very much to live, and I finish this work. I want that child. So that puts me in fear of death. If I had no desire to complete that book, I wouldn't mind dying. Now, both the Buddha and Christ found salvation beyond death, and returned from the wilderness to choose and instruct disciples, who then brought their message to the world.

The messages of the great teachers—Moses, the Buddha, Christ, Mohammed—differ greatly. But their visionary journeys are much the same. At the time of his election, Mohammed was an illiterate camel-caravan master. But every day he would leave his home in Mecca and go out to a mountain cave to meditate. One day a voice called to him, "Write!" and he listened, and we have the Koran. It's an old, old story.

MOYERS: In each case, receivers of the boon have done some rather grotesque things with the interpretation of the hero's message.

CAMPBELL: There are some teachers who decide they won't teach at all because of what society will do with what they've found.

MOYERS: What if the hero returns from his ordeal, and the world doesn't want what he brings back?

CAMPBELL: That, of course, is a normal experience. It isn't always so much that the world doesn't want the gift, but that it doesn't know how to receive it and how to institutionalize it—

MOYERS:—how to keep it, how to renew it.

CAMPBELL: Yes, how to help keep it going.

MOYERS: I've always liked that image of life being breathed back into the dry bones, back into the ruins and the relics.

CAMPBELL: There's a kind of secondary heroism to revitalize the tradition. This hero reinterprets the tradition and makes it valid as a living experience today instead of a set of outdated clichés. This has to be done with all traditions.

MOYERS: So many of the religions began with the return home stories. The whole of the Orient has been blessed with the teachings of the great law brought back by Buddha, and the Occident has been blessed by the laws Moses brought back from Sinai. The tribal oracles heroes perform the deeds for a single folk, and in various heroes like Mohammed, Jesus, and Buddha bring the message from afar. These heroes of religion come back with the wonder of God, not with a blueprint of God.

CAMPBELL: Well, you find an awful lot of laws in the Old Testament.

MOYERS: But that's the transformation of religion to theology. Religion begins with the sense of wonder and awe and the attempt to tell stories that will connect us to God. Then it becomes a set of theological works in which everything is reduced to a code, to a creed.

CAMPBELL: That's the reduction of mythology to theology. Mythology is very fluid. Most of the myths are self-contradictory. You may even find four or five myths in a given culture, all giving different versions of the same mystery. Then if theology comes along and says it has got to be just this way. Mythology is poetry, and the poetic language is very flexible.

Religion turns poetry into prose. And it starts by up there, and this is literary what he thinks, and this is the way you've got to behave to get into proper relationship with that god up there.

MOYERS: You're not having to believe that there was a King Arthur to get the sign here?—I mean, stories, but the first of any we have to believe there was a Christ, or the miracles don't make sense.

AM BELL: They are the same miracles to the highly powered. There's a whole body of miracles that don't take particles in them, and a man of a certain type of achievement comes along and does these things as a matter of him. These stories of miracles let us know simply that it is remarkable man preached of a spiritual order that is prior to the agent here with the merely physical order. So he could perform spiritual miracles. It doesn't follow that he actually did any of these things, although the case is possible. Three or four times we've seen what appear to be magical effects, one of men and women of power can do things that you wouldn't think possible. We don't really know what the limits of the possible might be. But the miracles of legend need not necessarily have been facts. The Buddha walked on water, said Jesus. The Buddha ascended to heaven and returned.

MOYERS: I remember exactly in which you drew a circle and a circle said "That's your soul."

AM BELL: Well, that was simply a pedagogical stunt. Plato has said somewhere that the soul was a circle. I took this idea to suggest on the blackboard the whole sphere of that psyche. Then I drew a horizontal line across the circle to represent the line of separation of the conscious and unconscious. The center from which that center comes I represented as a dot in the center of the circle, so as to be in the center. An infant has no intention that doesn't come from its own free body requirements. That's the way life begins. An infant is mostly the impulse state. Then the mind comes along and has to figure out what it's all about, what it is, I want. And how do I get it?

Now, above the horizontal line there's the ego, which I represent as a square, that aspect of our consciousness that we want to be our center. But you see, it's very much off center. We think that this is what's running the show, but it isn't.

MOYERS: What's running the show?

AM BELL: What's running the show is what's coming up in the way down below. The period when we're in the womb is the only time in running the show as a fetus when I will be new system of requirements become unimpeded from the body. The whole concept of the self-test, and how to be able to do this, and cannot but wonder what it is that's pushing him, or even more mysterious, pushing us.

MOYERS: It seems fairly evident that we're here as infants with some kind of memory box down there.

AM BELL: Well, it's supposed I was in memory there as a newborn there. That infant knows what to do when it happens in its mouth. There's a whole system of built-in what we call when we say it in words we call instinct. That's a biological word, and, but then certain things happen that make



"Pedagogical stunt"

Plato said the soul is a circle. I drew a horizontal line across the circle to represent the line of separation of the conscious and the unconscious. The dot in the center of the circle below the horizontal line represents the center from which all our energies come. Above the horizontal line is the ego, represented as a square, that aspect of our consciousness that we identify as our center. In a very off-center place, that is, a circle, that's the whole idea.

a repulsive or difficult or frightening or sinful to do some of the things that one is impelled to do, and that is when we begin to have our most troublesome psychological problems.

Myths primarily are for fundamental instruction in these matters. Our society today is not giving us adequate mythic instruction; this kind and so young people are finding it difficult to get their act together. I have a theory that if you can find out where a person is blocked, it should be possible to find a mythological counterpart for that particular threshold problem.

MOYERS: We hear people say, 'Get in touch with yourself.' What do you take that to mean?

CAMPBELL: It's quite possible to be so influenced by the ideas and commands of your neighborhood that you don't know what you really want and could be. I think that anyone brought up in an extremely strict authoritative social situation is unlikely ever to come to the knowledge of himself.

MOYERS: Because you're told what to do.

CAMPBELL: You're told exactly what to do every bit of the time. You're in the army now. So this is what we do here. As a child in school, you're always doing what you're told to do, and so you count the days to your holidays, since that's when you're going to be yourself.

MOYERS: What does mythology tell us about how to get in touch with that other self, that real self?

CAMPBELL: The first instruction would be to follow the hints of the myth itself and of your guru, your teacher, who should know. It's like an athlete going to a coach. The coach tells him how to bring his own energies into play. A good coach doesn't tell a runner exactly how to hold his arms or anything like that. He watches him run, then helps him to correct his own natural mode. A good teacher is there to watch the young person and recognize what the possibilities are, then to give advice, not commands. The command would be, 'This is the way I do it, so you must do it this way, too.' Some artists teach their students that way. But the teacher in any case has to take it out, to give some general clues. If you don't have someone to do that for you, you've got to work it all out from scratch—like reinventing the wheel.

A good way to learn is to find a book that seems to be dealing with the problems that you're now dealing with. That will certainly give you some clues. In my own case I took my instruction from reading Thomas Mann and James Joyce, both of whom I had applied basic mythological themes to the interpretation of the problems, questions, realizations, and concerns of young men growing up in the modern world. You can discover your own guiding myth motifs through the works of a good novelist who himself understands these things.

MOYERS: That's what intrigues me. If we are fortunate, if the gods and muses are smiling, about every generation someone comes along to inspire the imagination for the journey each of us takes. In your day it was Joyce and Mann. In our day it feels as though it be muses. Do movies create hero

myths? Is this the kind of example that a movie like *Star Wars* has some of that need for a model of the hero?

CAMPBELL: I've heard of teachers use some of the religious terms — the 'force' and 'the dark side.' So it must be hitting somewhere. It's a good sound teaching. I would say

MOYERS: I think that explains in part the success of *Star Wars*. It wasn't just the production value that made that such an exciting film to watch. It was that it came along at a time when people needed to see in recognizable images the class struggle and evil. They needed to be reminded of idealism, to see a marketplace based upon selflessness rather than selfishness.

CAMPBELL: The fact that the evil power is not identified with any specific nation or ethnicity means you've got an abstract power, which represents a principle, not a specific institutionalization. The story has to do with an operation of principles, not of institutions, in itself. The monster masks that are put on people in *Star Wars* represent therefore a monster force in the modern world. When the mask of Darth Vader is removed, you see an unformed man, one who has not developed as a human individual. What you see is a strange and pitiful sort of undifferentiated face.

MOYERS: What's the significance of that?

CAMPBELL: Darth Vader has not developed his own humanity. He is a robot. He's a bureaucrat, living not in terms of himself but in terms of an imposed system. This is the threat to our lives that we all face today. Is the system going to flatten you out and destroy your humanity, or are you going to be able to make use of the system to the attainment of human purposes? How do you create the system so that you are not compulsively serving it. It doesn't help to try to change it, to deal with your system of thought. The momentum of history is so great it's great for anything to be significant to evolve from that kind of action. The thing to do is learn to live in your period of history as a human being. That's something else, and it can be done.

MOYERS: By doing what?

CAMPBELL: By listening to your own voice, not your father's, like Luke Skywalker, rejecting the system's impersonal machinery.

MOYERS: When I took our two sons to see *Star Wars*, they did the same thing the audience did at that moment when the voice of Ben Kenobi says to Skywalker in the confrontation of the last night: 'Turn off your computer, turn off your machine and do it yourself. Do it with your feelings, trust your feelings.' And at the end he achieves success — the audience broke out into applause.

CAMPBELL: We've seen that movie promulgates. It is a language that talks to young people and tells what counts. It asks: Are you going to be a person of heart and humanity? Or use that's where the energy is, in the heart. Or are you going to do what never seems to be required of you by what might be called 'intent' or 'power'? When Ben Kenobi says, 'May the force be with you,' he's speaking of the power and energy of the inner, of programmed political intentions.



Darth Vader and Boba Fett in *The Empire Strikes Back*.

The monster masks that are put on people in *Star Wars* represent the real monster-force in the modern world. When the mask of Darth Vader is removed, you see an informed man, one who has not developed as a human individual. He's a bureaucrat, living not in terms of himself but in terms of an imposed system.

MOYERS: I was intrigued by the definition of the Force. Ben Kenobi says, "The Force is an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us, it penetrates us, it binds the galaxies together." And I've read in *The Hermit with a Thousand Faces* similar descriptions of the world navel, of the sacred place of the power that is at the moment of creation.

CAMPBELL: Yes, of course, the Force moves from within. But the force of the Empire is based on an intent to conquer and master. *Star Wars* is not a simple morality play; it has to do with the powers that are as they are, either fulfilled or broken and suppressed through the action of man.

MOYERS: The first time I saw *Star Wars*, I thought, "This is a very old story in a very new costume." The story of the young man called to adventure, the hero going out facing the trials and ordeals, and coming back after his victory with a boon for the community—

CAMPBELL: Certainly. Lucas was using standard mythological figures. The old man as the adviser made me think of a Japanese sword master. I've known some of those people, and Ben Kenobi has a bit of their character.

MOYERS: What does the sword master do?

CAMPBELL: He is a technical expert in swordsmanship. The Oriental cultivation of the martial arts goes beyond anything I've ever encountered in American gymnasiums. There's a psychological as well as a physical technique that go together there. This character in *Star Wars* has that quality.

MURKIN: But I can hear someone saying, "Well, that's all well and good for the imagination. But George Lucas did the sequel days up at Joseph Campbell, but that isn't what happens in my life."

AMER: Yes, but it's not the best freedom. It's a man that has
into Darth Vader. If the person insists on a certain program, and doesn't listen to the demands of his own heart, he's going to risk a schizophrenic crackup. Such a person is a public object. He has a great conflict with a program for life, and isn't the one he's really interested in it. The wrong is that of people who have stopped listening to themselves, or have listened only to their own, don't learn what they ought to do, how they ought to be, and what the values are that they should be living for.

MURKIN: Given what I know is at hand, it seems so reasonable that there is a part of wisdom beyond the concepts of that, and I don't see what our lives can be put back together with it. I can recover new worlds.

JONAH CHAP. 31

Jonah delivered from the fish.



JONAH 2 Verse 10.
*And the LORD spoke unto the
fish and it vomited out Jonah
upon the dry land.*

Jonah and the whale.

The story of Jonah and the whale is an example of a mythic theme that is practically universal, of the hero going into a fun's belly and ultimately coming out again, transformed. The whale represents the power of life locked in the unconscious, and the creature as the water is the life or energy of the unconscious, which has overwhelmed the conscious personality and must be disempowered, overcome and controlled.

CAM BELLE: They're already here, in the religions. All religions have been true for the time — you can recognize the enduring aspect of their truth and separate it from the temporary applications, you've got it.

We've spoken about it a little here, the sacrifice of the physical desires and fears of the body so that which spiritually supports the body, is the body learning to know and express its deepest self in the field of the One way — in other words, how to find what best expresses the flowering of our humanity in this complex, tortuous and chaotic universe that is

MOYERS: Not the first cause, but a higher cause?

CAM BELLE: I would say a more inward cause. Higher is just up there, and there's not up there. We know that. That's a map up there I have shown away. You've got to find the Force inside you. This is very Oriental, gurus are so convincing to young people today. They say "it is in you. Go and find it."

MOYERS: But isn't it — I think you can — can use the challenge of a new truth and put the lives in accord with it?

CAM BELLE: Not at all. A challenge to the teachers and the readers, but this is something that anybody can respond to, just somebody has the potential to react to save a child. It is a thing everybody has responded to, is in his life that are not explained to him, sentences of the body and economic concerns of the day.

MOYERS: When was a boy and read knights of the Round Table, myths stirred me to think that I could be a hero. I wanted to go out and adventure with dragons, wanted to go into the dark forest and slay a dragon. What does it say to you that myths cause this sort of Oklahoma farmer to think of himself as a hero?

CAM BELLE: Myths inspire the recognition of the possibility of your perfection, the firmness of your strength, and the bringing of your light into the world. Saving the sisters is saving the dark things. Myths grab you somewhere down inside. As a boy, I go at it the way I did reading my Indian stories. Later, in myths, tell you more and more and still more. I think that in one who has ever walked with the gods or mythic ideas will always have learned to walk a circle on one level, but even if my ancient lives are real like. Myths are profound in their revelation.

MOYERS: How do I seek the "design in me"? What's the journey each of us has to make, what you call "the soul's high adventure"?

CAM BELLE: My general formula for my students is: Find your bliss. Find where it is, and don't be afraid to follow it.

MOYERS: Is it my work or my life?

CAM BELLE: If you're happy, you're doing it. The work that you are to do, because you're enjoying it, that's it. But if you think, Oh no, I couldn't do that, that's the way of looking upon it. No, no, I can do it, I will do it, because I can't possibly do what I should be doing.

MOYERS: In the sense of the heroes such as Prometheus, if Jesus, we're not going on our journey to save the world but to save ourselves.

CAMPBELL: But in doing that, you save the world. The influence of a vital person vitalizes; there's no doubt about it. The world without spirit is a wasteland. People have the notion of saving the world by shoring things around, changing the rules, and who's on top, and so forth. But no. Any world is a valid world if it's alive. The thing to do is to bring life to it, and the only way to do that is to find in your own case where the life is and become alive yourself.

MOYERS: When I take that journey and go down there and save the dragons, do I have to go alone?

CAMPBELL: If you have someone who can help you, that's fine too. But, ultimately, the last deed has to be done by oneself. Psychologically, the dragon is one's own binding of oneself to one's ego. We're captured in our own dragon cage. The problem of the psychiatrist is to disintegrate that dragon, break him up, so that you may expand to a larger field of relationships. The ultimate dragon is within you; it's your ego clamping you down.

MOYERS: What's my ego?

CAMPBELL: What you think you want, what you want to be even, what you think you can afford, what you need to love, a narrow regard of yourself as bound to. It may be all much too small in which case the world may down. And if you simply do what your neighbors tell you to do, you're certainly going to be nailed down. Your neighbors, in their fear of dragons, reflect from within yourself.

Our Western dragons represent greed. However, the Chinese dragons



St. George and the Dragon, Paolo Uccello, ca. 1460.

We're captured in our own dragon cage. The problem of the psychiatrist is to disintegrate that dragon, break him up, so that you may expand to a larger field of relationships. The ultimate dragon is within you; it's your ego clamping you down.

different. It represents the volatility of life, storms and comes as beating its fury and howling, "I'm here! I'm here!" It is a warning, but for good or ill, the that you as the bearer of the waters, water and storms, are, but the dragon of our Western times tries to collect and keep everything to himself. To his secret cave he carries if not his hoard of gold, perhaps a treasure vault, he doesn't know what to do with other than to put it in his hoard and keeps. There are people like that, and we all know them. They are in fact from them, no going. They are going themselves, they are and being it, and they try to suck out of you their life.

Myth has a purpose, it was made, it is, because she is there, but it is the one in the world, in the rocks, and when she drew up, and it is there, now, so far, there she was, in the rocks, in the water, so, in the rocks, in the water, down. The wind was blowing, the water was moving, and the globe, as the power of life was looking away from her, in the rocks. The next part is that she drew, however, it showed a shining ray, it was, so, to her. A flash of lightning strikes the rocks, and a golden disk is being pulled out. There is a more golden disk, in the rocks. There are golden patches now on the surface. In the course of time, as the rocks are followed, these patches of gold were kept, held. They were her friends. She was there, then. She had looked herself in her own little town, and she was, how, friends. Her recognition of these, it showed once after the killing of her, at dawn.

MOYER: I like what you say about the old myth of Theseus and Ariadne. Theseus says to Ariadne, "I can't find my way out of this labyrinth. You can show me the way to come out of the labyrinth." So she gives him a ball of string, which he unwinds as he goes into the labyrinth, and then it was to find the way out. You say, "All he had was the string. That's all you need."

CAMPBELL: That's all you need—an Ariadne thread.

MOYER: Sometimes we don't take it, we don't use it, so a great power to save us, or great ideas to save us, when all we need is that piece of string.

CAMPBELL: That's not always so, is it? But it's nice to have someone who can give you a clue. That's the teacher's job, to help you find your Ariadne thread.

MOYER: Like all heres, the Buddha doesn't show you the way, but he shows you the way to truth.

CAMPBELL: But it's not to be your way, not his. The Buddha can't tell you exactly how to get rid of your particular fears, for example. Different teachers may suggest exercises, but they may not be the ones to work for you. A teacher can only suggest. He shows a light, those that see. There are rocks over here, over there. There is a road, however, our there.

The big problem of the young person is to see some models, suggest possibilities. Nietzsche says, "Man is the sick animal. Man is the animal that doesn't know what to do with itself. The mind has many possibilities, but we can live no more than one life. What are we going to do with ourselves? A living myth presents contemporary models.

MOYER: Today, we have an endless variety of models. A lot of people end up choosing many and never knowing who they are.

CAMPBELL: When you choose your model, you have actually chosen

a model, and it will fit you in a little while. After middle life, for example, you can pretty well tell what a person's profession is. Whenever I go, people know I'm a professor. I don't know what it is that I do, I just know I look, hear, feel, too, like ten professors from engineers and merchants. You're shaped by your life.

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MOYERS: There is a wonderful image in King Arthur where the knights of the Round Table are about to enter the search for the Grail in the Dark Forest, and the narrator says, "They thought it would be a disgrace to go forth in a group. So each entered the Forest at a separate point of his choice." I have interpreted that to express the Western emphasis upon the unique phenomenon of a single human life: the individual confronting darkness.

CAMPBELL: What struck me when I read that in the thirteenth-century *Queste del Saint Graal* was that it epitomizes an especially Western spiritual aim and idea, which is, it is saying the life that is potential in you and was never in anyone else as a possibility.

This, I believe, is the great Western truth: that each of us is a completely unique creature and that, if we are ever to give any gift to the world, it will have to come out of our own experience and fulfillment of our own potentialities, not someone else's. In the traditional Orient, on the other hand, and generally in all traditionally grounded societies, the individual is cookie-molded. His duties are put upon him in exact and precise terms, and there's no way of breaking out from them. When you go to a guru to be guided on the spiritual way, he knows just where you are on the traditional path, just where you have to go next, just what you must do to get there. He'll give you his picture to wear, so you can be like him. That wouldn't be a proper Western pedagogical way of guidance. We have to give our students guidance in developing their own pictures of themselves. What each must seek in his life never was, on land or sea. It is to be something out of his own unique potentiality for experience, something that never has been and never could have been experienced by anyone else.

MOYERS: There's the question Hamlet asked: "Are you up to your destiny?"

CAMPBELL: Hamlet's problem was that he wasn't. He was given a destiny too big for him to handle, and it blew him to pieces. That can happen, too.

MOYERS: Which stories from mythology help us understand death?

CAMPBELL: You don't understand death, you learn to acquiesce in death. I would say that the story of Christ assuming the form of a human servant, even to death in the cross, is the principal lesson for us of the acceptance of death. The story of Oedipus and the Sphinx has something to say of this, too. The Sphinx in the Oedipus story is not the Egyptian Sphinx, but a female form with the wings of a bird, the body of an animal, and the breast, neck, and face of a woman. What she represents is the destiny of all life. She has sent a plague over the land, and to lift the plague, the hero has to answer the riddle that she presents. "What is it that walks on four legs, then on two legs, and then on three?" The answer is "Man." The child creeps about on four legs, the adult walks on two, and the aged walk with a cane.

The riddle of the Sphinx is the image of life itself through time —

childhood, maturity, age, and death. When you start to see you have used and accepted the middle of the Sphinx, which was not that hard on you, and the ease of the Sphinx disappears. The expectation of the fear of death is the recovery of life, not a blow on experience and a conditional suspension of life, only when you have accepted death, not as contrary to life but as a part of it. Life is becoming slowly shaking death, and at the point of death. The conquest of our life is a conquest of life. That is the card to maintain in every heroic adventure: fearlessness and achievement. I remember reading in a box of the war cry of the German braves a daring battle against the rap of bullets: a woman's poem. "When I would die, I don't die." There was a line in there: "There is life." That is one of the great messages of myth. Life is a new knowledge, in not the best form of my being. We must constantly die, one way or another, to the symbols already achieved.

MOYERS: Do you have a story that illustrates this?

ANITA: Well, the English tale of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is a good one. One day a king and a company of knights go to a great green horse into King Arthur's domain. "I'll dance anyone here," he cried. "I'll take this great battle ax that I carry and cut off my head, and then, one year from today, meet me at the green's chapel, where I shall cut off his head."

The only knight in the hall who had the courage to accept this challenge was Sir Gawain. He refused in the first, the Green Knight got on his horse, handed Gawain the ax, struck over his neck, and Gawain with a noble stroke, chopped it off his head. The Green Knight stood up, picked up his head, took back his ax, climbed onto his horse, and when he rode away, called back to the astonished Gawain: "I see you're a coward."

That year everybody was very kind to Gawain. A fortnight or so before the term of his adventure, he rode to the search for the Green Chapel and kept faith with the great Green Knight. As the date approached, with about three days to go, Gawain found himself before a winter's cabin, where he asked the way to the Green Chapel. The winter, a pleasant old fellow, met him at the door and replied: "Well, the Chapel is just down the way a few hundred miles. Why not spend your next three days in my house? We'd love to have you. And when your time comes, your green friend is just down the way."

So Gawain says, "ok." And the hunter that evening says to him: "Now, early in the morning, if you're off hunting, but I'll be back in the evening, when we shall exchange our winnings. And when I give you everything I get in the hunt, and you give me whatever you have come to you." They laugh, and that was fine with Gawain. So they all retire to bed.

In the morning, only the hunter wakes, in which Gawain is still asleep. Presently, it comes the hunter's extra duty, his beautiful wife, who tickles Gawain under the chin and wakes him, and passionately invites him to a morning of love. Well, he's a knight of King Arthur's court, and to her he's his best of the last things, a knight can stop for a second, but sternly resists. However, she is insistent and makes him, and in the afternoon of that thing, she finally she says to him, "Well then, let me give you just one kiss!" So she gives him one large smack. And that was that.

That evening, the hunter arrives with a great haul of all kinds of small

time, throws it on the floor, and slowly gives him one kiss. They laugh, and that, too, was that.

The second morning, the wife comes into the room more passionate than ever, and the first kiss that encounter is two kisses. The hunter in the evening returns with about half as much game as he ate and receives two kisses, and again they laugh.

On the third morning the wife comes and crouches by the fire, and about to meet his wife, he has a time can do to keep his head and neck his knight's honor with this slight before him, it is a sure life. This time he accepts three kisses. And when she has received these, she tells him a token of her love, to accept her garter. It is a good one, she says, and will protect you against every danger. So Gwynn accepts the garter. And when the hunter returns with just one very small fox, which he tosses on the floor, he receives in exchange three kisses from Gwynn, but no garter.

Oh, we must wait for the rest, for this young knight Gwynn. They are the same as the first two of Buddha, who is at death's last. The first is of the fear of death. Gwynn had proved strange enough in just keeping his faith with this adventure. However, the garter was just one temptation for many.

So when Gwynn is approaching the Green Chapel, he meets the Green Knight there, whetting the great ax, what with what with Gwynn arrives, and the giant simply says to him, "Stretch your neck out here on this block." Gwynn does so, and the Green Knight lifts the ax, but it pauses. "No stretch that a little more," he says. Gwynn does so, and again the giant cleaves the great ax. At the last, he says once again, "Gwynn does the best he can, and then whittles only a ring Gwynn's neck one little scratch. Then the Green Knight, who is in fact the hunter himself, is ashamed, explains, "That's for the garter."

This, they say, is the origin, again, of the belief of the knights of the Garter.

MOYERS: And the moral of the story?

I AM NOT. The moral, I suppose, would be that the best requirements for a heroic career are the knightly virtues of loyalty, endurance, and courage. The irony in this case is of two degrees: the commitment first to the chosen adventure, but if one goes to the ideals of the order of knight-hood, how this seems contradictory seems to put Gwynn's way in opposition to the way of the Buddha, who, when ordered by the Lord of Duts to perform the work of a proper knight, is quite simply ignored the challenge, and that night achieved illumination as well as a case from which Gwynn as a European and a Greek Adiosas, who remained true to the earth and returned from the Island of the Sun to his marriage with Penelope, he has accepted, is the commitment of his life to such a form but away to the values of life in this world. And yet, as we have just seen, what if it were the middle way of the Buddha or the middle way of Gwynn, if it is possible to fulfillment lies between the perils of desire and fear.

A third position, I see, than Gwynn's is that of the Buddha, yet I do not see the values of the Buddhist, is that. Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In a kind of parable, Nietzsche describes what he calls the three transformations of the spirit. The first is that of the camel, of child and youth. The camel gets down on his knees and says, "Put a load on me."

This is the way in for freedom: receiving instruction and the information your society requires of you in order to live a responsible life.

But when the camel is well trained it struggles to its feet and runs— it enters the desert where it is transformed into a lion: the heavier the load that had been carried, the stronger the lion will be. Now, the task of the lion is to kill a dragon and the name of the dragon is "Thou shalt." On every scale of this scale, however, this "thou shalt" is imprinted some ten or four thousand years ago—others from this morning's headlines. Whereas the camel, the child, had to submit to the "thou shalts," the lion, the youth, is to throw them off and come to his own realization.

And so when the dragon is thoroughly gone with all its "thou shalts" overcome, the lion is transformed into a child moving out of its own nature, like a wheel impelled from its own hub. No more rules to obey, no more rules derived from the historic needs and tasks of the whole society, but the pure impulse to living of a life in flower.

MOYERS: So we return to Eden?

CAMPBELL: To Eden before the Fall.

MOYERS: What are the "thou shalts" of a child that he needs to shed?

CAMPBELL: Every one that inhibits his self-fulfillment. For the camel, the "thou shalt" is a must, a compelling force. It converts the human animal into a civilized human being. But the period of youth is the period of self-discovery and transformation into a lion. The rules are now to be used, if will for life, not submitted to as compelling "thou shalts."

Something of this kind has to be recognized and dealt with in any serious student of art. It is no good a master's study and learning the technique, was diligent yet follow all the instructions the master puts upon you. But then comes the time for using the process in your own way and not being bound by them. That is the time for the lion-leap. You can actually forget the rules because they have been assimilated. You are an artist. Your own innocence now is of one who has become a master, who has been, as it were, transmuted. You don't behave as the person behaves who has never mastered an art.

MOYERS: You say the time comes. How does a child know when his time has come? In ancient societies the boy's life examples went through a ritual which told him the time had come. He knew that he was no longer a child and that he had to put off the influences of others and stand on his own. We don't have such a clear moment of transition into man in our society that says to my son, "You are a man." Where is the passage today?

CAMPBELL: I don't have the answer. The rest of you must leave it up to the boy to know when he has got his power. A baby bird knows when to fly. We have a couple of birds nests right here where we have breakfast in the morning and we have seen several of the little ones—just now. These little things don't panic at all. They stay on the branch until they know how to fly, and then they fly. I think somehow, inside, a person knows this.

I can give you examples from what I know of students in art schools. There comes a moment when they have learned what the artist can teach them. They have assimilated the craft and they are ready for their own flight. Some of the artists allow their students to do that. They expect the

student to fly off. Others want to establish a school, and the student finds he has got to be nasty to die to cheer or to say bad things about him in order to get his own flight. But that is the teacher's own fault. He ought to have known it was time for the student to fly. The students I know, the ones who are really valued as students, know when it's time to push off.

MOYERS: There's an old prayer that says, "Lord, teach us when to let go." All of us have to know that, don't we?

CAMPBELL: That's the big problem of the parent. Being a parent is one of the most demanding careers I know. When I think what my father and mother gave up of themselves to launch their family well, I really appreciate that.

My father was a businessman, and of course he would have been very happy to have his son go into business with him and take it on. In fact, I did go into business with Dad for a couple of months, and then I thought, "Geez, I can't do this." And he let me go. There's that testing time in your life when you have got to test yourself out to your own flight.

MOYERS: Myths used to help us know when to let go.

CAMPBELL: Myths formulate stages of you. They say, for example, that you have to become an adult at a particular age. The age might be a good average age for that to happen—but actually, in the individual life, it differs greatly. Some people are late bloomers and come to particular stages at a relatively late age. You have to have a feeling for where you are. You've got only one chance to live, and you don't have to live it for six people. Pay attention to it.

MOYERS: What about happiness? If I'm a young person and I want to be happy, what do myths tell me about happiness?

CAMPBELL: The way to find out about your happiness is to keep your mind on those moments when you feel most happy—when you really are happy, not excited, not just carried, but deeply happy. This requires a little bit of self-analysis. What is it that makes you happy? Stay with it, no matter what people tell you. This is what I call "following your bliss."

MOYERS: But how does mythology tell you are or what makes you happy?

CAMPBELL: It won't tell you what makes you happy, but it will tell you what happens when you begin to follow your happiness, what the obstacles are that you're going to run into.

For example, there's a motif in American Indian stories that I call "the refusal of suitors." There's a young girl, beautiful, charming, and the young men invite her to marry. "No, no, no," she says. "There's a hawk around good enough for me." So a serpent comes, and it's a boy who won't have anything to do with her; the serpent queen of a great lake might come. As soon as you have refused the suitors, you have created yourself out of the local field and put yourself in the hell of higher power, higher danger. The question is, are you going to be able to handle it?

Another American Indian motif involves a mother and two little boys. The mother says, "You can play around the houses, but don't go north." So they go north. There's the adventurer.

AMABEL: With the refusal of suitors at the passing over a boundary, the adventure begins. You get into a hold that's more restricted now. You can't have everything you desire and, as a husband, this boy has the best of the rules.

Now, there's another story that illustrates the motif of the rejection of suitors. A girl lived with her mother in a village on the edge of a village. She was a very beautiful girl but extremely spoiled and would not accept any of the boys. The mother was terribly annoyed with her.

One day they went out to the woods quite a long way from the village and when they were in a enormous darkness they saw them. Now this wasn't the dark of night as we think. When you have a darkness of this kind, there's a magic at work somewhere behind. So the mother says, "Let's gather some bark and make a little wigwam for ourselves and a little firewood for a fire, and we'll just spend the night here."

So they do exactly that. The purpose of this is, of course, and the mother tries to explain to the girl, to keep and there's a magnificent young man standing there before her with a wampum sash, greenish black feathers, a very handsome fellow. He says, "I've come to marry you, and I'll wait for your reply."

And she says, "I have to consult with my mother."

She does so. The mother accepts the young man, and he gives the daughter the wampum belt to prove he's serious about the proposal. Then he says to the girl, "I told I would do so. I come to marry you. And so she leaves with him. More than in being were it good enough for this young lady, so now she has something really special.

MOYERS: If she hadn't said no, the first suitors who came through the routine social convention—

AMABEL: —she wouldn't be having this adventure. Now the adventure is strange and mysterious. She accepts the man, his village, and they enter his house. They spend two nights and then together, and on the third day he says to her, "I'm going to do a thing. So he goes. But after he has closed the flap of the entrance, she hears a strange sound outside. She opens the flap in the hut alone and when evening comes, she hears the strange sound again. The entrance flap is hung open and in slides a prodigious serpent with a long forked tongue. She binds it with a magic thing there, and when she has killed it, then it withdraws his head and slides out of the cage, and in a moment after the door flap has closed, it opens again, and in comes her same beautiful young man. "Were you afraid of me when I came in that way just now?" he asks.

"No," she replies, "I wasn't afraid at all."

So the next day he goes off to hunt again, and presently she steps out the lodge together with him. The first thing she sees is a magnificent serpent basking on the rocks, and then in the middle of the forest. She begins to feel very strange. A music and a song, and she returns to the lodge.

That evening the serpent again comes and in a moment disappears and returns as a man. The third day when he has gone, the young woman decides she's going to the lodge out of this place. So it was the voice of the

in the woods alone, standing, thinking, when she hears a voice. She turns and there's a little old man, who says, "Darling, you are in trouble. The man you've married is one of seven brothers. They are all great magicians and, like many people of this kind, their hearts are not in their bodies, but back into the lodge, and in a bag that is hidden under the rock, the one to whom you are married, you will find a collection of seven hearts." This is a standard worldwide shamanic motif. The heart is in the body, so if the magician can't be killed, you have to find and destroy the heart.

She returns to the lodge, finds the bag full of hearts, and is running out with it when a voice calls to her. "Stop, stop." This is the voice of course, of the magician. But she continues to run. And the voice calls after, "You may think you can get away from me, but you never will."

Just at that point, she is beginning to faint, when she hears again the voice of the little old man. "The power," it says and to her surprise, he is pulling her out of the water. She hasn't known that she was in water. That is to say, that with her marriage she had moved out of the rational, conscious sphere into the field of compulsions of the unconscious. That's always what's represented in such adventures under water. The character has slipped out of the realm of conscious life into that of transpersonal compulsions and events. Now, maybe these can be handled, maybe they can't.

What happens next in this story is that when the old man has pulled her out of the water, she finds herself in the midst of a company of old men standing along the shore, all looking exactly like her rescuer. They are the Thunderer's powers, of the proper air. That is, she is still in the transcendent realm into which she brought herself by her refusal of suitors; now, having torn herself away from the negative aspect of the powers, she has come into possession of the positive.

There's a little more to this legend to tell about this young woman, now

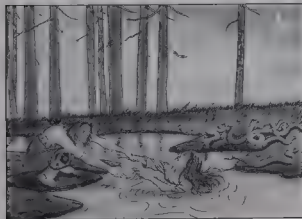


Illustration by
Steven Parton.

To her surprise, he is pulling her out of the water. She hadn't known that she was in water—that is to say, that with her marriage she had moved out of the rational, conscious sphere into the field of compulsions of the unconscious.

in the service of the higher powers, enabled them to destroy the negative powers of the gods, and now, after that, one was conducted back, through a rainstorm, to the lodge of her mother.

AMATE: Would you tell us if your students in school think of how, if they know their boss, they take charges with their lives, if they do what they want to, the adventure is its own reward?

AMATE: The adventure is its own reward, but it's necessarily dangerous. There is the negative and positive possibilities of it, that they have to control. We are following our way, but not exactly our own, their's way. So we are seeing a reflection of the field of higher powers that we know, who have to have some sense of what the possible things will be in this field, and hence a few possible responses like this man, he has to know what to expect. If we have been in the war and danger or the negative for the love of it, which we have cast ourselves, it's going to be a deadly marriage and a real mess. However, eventually there may be a kind of something which, to convert the adventure into a glory beyond anything ever imagined.

AMATE: I suppose that is why you—the word not take the charges.

AMATE: Yes, but then the negative possibilities were not, if you are not aware of the charges, I have had opposite and the opposite surprise, experience in meeting and coming to know someone whose whole youth was conditioned and directed by others, from first to last. My friend, a Tibetan who is a Buddhist, was regarded as being the reincarnation of an abbot who had been reincarnating since about the seventeenth century. He was taken into the monastery at the age of two but in that time, never was asked what he would like to do, but in all things toward that center there was a destruction of his masters. His entire life was planned for him according to the ritual requirements of Tibetan Buddhism to mastery the every stage in his spiritual development was ceremonized with ceremony. His personal life was translated into a ritual pattern so that, though on the surface he would seem to be enjoying his personal existence whatever it was, actually, underneath, deep spiritual level an archetypal life like that of a divinity.

In 1970, his life ended. The Chinese Communist military station in China burned the summer palace of the Fifth Dalai and a season of massacres began. There were no monasteries around Lhasa of as many as six thousand monks, and were destroyed, and their monks and monks were killed and their families died together with him, because of other refugees, across the almost impassable Himalayas to India. It is a terrible story, largely untold.

I believe these survivors people arrived in India, with one hundred, came of his own population, and among the refugees were the Dalai Lama himself and a number of the leading lamas and abbots of the great monasteries now destroyed. And they all agreed Buddhist Tibet's finished. My friend, the other young monks was married to a wife, he was advised that time, to forget their vows of the past, and to take free to choose either to marry some new woman, or to give up the monastic life and try to find a way to re-people their lives to the requirements and possibilities of the modern secular man.

My friend, the latter was not realizing, of course, what this would

mean in the way of frustration, poverty, and suffering. He has had a really difficult time, but I've survived it with the will and compassion of a saint. Nothing takes him. I've known and worked with him now for over a decade and in all this time I haven't heard one word, either of retribution against the Chinese or of complaint about the treatment he has received here in the West. Not from the Dalai Lama himself will you ever hear a word of resentment or condemnation. These men and all their friends have been the victims of a terrible upheaval of terrible violence, and yet they have no hatred. I have learned what religion is from these men. There is true religion alive—today.

MYERS: Love thine enemies.

CAMPBELL: Love thine enemies because they are the instruments of your destiny.

MYERS: What do myths tell us about a God who lets two sons die one time by day in a relatively short period of time, and who continuously visits on that turn of day one or the other after another? I remember the story of the young Buddha, who saw the decrepit old man and said, "Shame on birth because to everyone who is born, old age will come." What does mythology say about suffering?

CAMPBELL: Since you bring up the Buddha, let's talk about that example. The story of the Buddha's childhood is that he was born as a prince and that at the time of his birth, a prophet told his father that the infant would grow up to be either a world ruler or a world teacher. The good king was interested in his own profession, and the last thing he wanted was that his son should become a teacher of any kind. So he arranged to have the child brought up in an especially beautiful palace where he should experience nothing the least bit ugly or unpleasant that might turn his mind to serious thoughts. Beautiful young women played music and took care of the child. And there were beautiful gardens, fountains, ponds, and all.

But then one day the young prince said to his chariot driver, his closest friend, "I'd like to go out and see what life is like in the town." His father, on hearing this, tried to make everything nice so that his son, the young prince, should see nothing of the pain and misery of life in this world. The gods, however, saw to it that the father's program for his son should be frustrated.

So, as the royal chariot was rolling along through the town, which had been swept clean with everything ugly kept out of sight, one of the gods assumed the form of a decrepit old man and was standing there within view. "What's that?" the young prince asked his charioteer, and the reply he received was, "That's an old man. That's age."

"Are all men then to grow old?" asked the prince.

"Ah, yes," the charioteer replied.

"Then shame on life," said the traumatized young prince, and he begged, sick at heart, to be driven home.

On a second trip, he saw a sick man, thin and weak and tortering, and again, on learning the meaning of this sight, his heart failed him, and the chariot returned to the palace.

On the third trip, the prince saw a corpse being mourned by mourners. "That," said the charioteer, "is death."

"Turn back," said the prince, "that I may somehow find deliverance from these destroyers of life—old age, sickness, and death."

Just one trip more—and what he sees this time is a misadventurous monk. "What sort of man is that?" he asks.

"That's a holy man," the driver replies, "one who has abandoned the goods of this world and lives without desire or fear." Whereupon the young prince, on returning to his palace, resolves to leave his father's house and to seek a way of release from life's sorrows.

MOYERS: Do most myths say that suffering is an intrinsic part of life, and that there's no way around it?

CAMPBELL: I can't think of any myth say that if you're going to live, you won't suffer. Myths tell us how to confront and bear and interpret suffering, but they wouldn't say that in a life there can't or shouldn't be any suffering.

When the Buddha declares there's escape in nirvana, the escape is nirvana, which is not a place like heaven, but a psychological state of mind in which you are released from desire and fear.

MOYERS: And your life becomes—

CAMPBELL: . . . harmonious, centered, and affirmative.

MOYERS: Even with suffering?

CAMPBELL: Exactly. The Buddhists speak of the bodhisattva—the one who knows immortality yet voluntarily enters into the field of the fragmentation of time and participates willingly and justly in the sorrow of the world. And this means not only experiencing sorrow oneself but participating with compassion in the sorrows of others. Compassion is the awakening of the heart from bestial self-interest to humanity. The word "compassion" means literally "suffering with."

MOYERS: But you don't mean compassion condones suffering, do you?

CAMPBELL: Of course compassion condones suffering in that it recognizes, yes, suffering is a life.

MOYERS: That life is lived with suffering—

CAMPBELL: . . . with the suffering, but you're not going to get rid of it. Who, when or where, has ever been quit of the suffering of a life in this world?

I had an illuminating experience from a woman who had been in severe physical pain for years, from an affliction that had stricken her in her youth. She had been raised a believing Christian and so thought this had been God's punishment of her for something she had done or now done at that time. She was in spiritual as well as physical pain. I told her that if she wanted release she should affirm and not deny her suffering was her life, and that through it she had become the whole creature that she now was. And while I was saying all this, I was thinking, "Who am I to talk like this to a person in real pain when I've never had anything more than a toothache?" But in this conversation, in affirming her suffering as the shaper and teacher of her life, she experienced a conversion right then. I have kept in touch with her since—that was years and years ago—and she is indeed a transformed woman.

MOYERS: There was a moment of illumination?

CAMPBELL: Right there—I saw it happen.

MOYERS: Was it something you said mythologically?

CAMPBELL: Yes, at the end it's a little hard to explain. I have not the belief that she was herself the cause of her suffering, but she had some responsibility about it. There is an important idea in Nietzsche's *Amor fati*, the "love of your fate," which is not at all worshipping fate, but saying that a single factor in your life will have unraveled the whole thing. Fate is not the more challenging or threatening the situation, the context, the assimilated, and affirmed, the greater the stature of the person who can achieve it. The demon that you can swallow gives you its power, and the greater the pain, the greater the life's reply.

My friend told me that. "Gaea did this to me," I told her. "No, you did it to yourself." The Gaea's work is you. You yourself are your creator. If you find that place in yourself from which you brought this thing about, you will be able to live with it and, through it, perhaps even enjoy it as your life."

MOYERS: The only alternative would be not to live.

CAMPBELL: "All life is suffering," said the Buddha, and Joyce was a Jew—"Is life worth leaving?"

MOYERS: But what about the young person who says, "I didn't choose to be born—my mother and father made the choice for me."

CAMPBELL: Freud tells us to blame our parents for all the shortcomings of our life, and Marx tells us to blame the "system," so that our society. But the only one to blame is oneself. That's the heart of the thing about the Indian idea of karma: Your life is the fruit of your own doing. You cannot blame to blame but yourself.

MOYERS: But what about chance? A drunken driver turns the corner and hits you. That isn't your fault. You haven't done that or your car.

CAMPBELL: From that point of view, is there anything in your life that did not occur as my chance? This is a matter of being able to accept chance. The ultimate backing of life is chance—the chance that your parents met, for example. Chance, or what might seem to be chance, is the means through which life is realized. The problem is not to blame or explain, but to handle the life that arises. And that war has been waged somewhere, and you are drafted into an army, and you're going to live or six years of your life with a whole new set of chance events. The best advice is to take it all as if it had been of your intention—with thanksgiving and participation of your will.

MOYERS: In a lot of these journeys of myth-lore, there's a place every one wishes to find. The Buddha seeks of Nirvana, and Jesus talks of peace, of the man's kingdom with many rulers, as that typical of the hero's journey—that there's a place to find?

CAMPBELL: The place to find is within yourself. I learned a little about this in athletics. The athlete who's in top form has a quiet place within himself, and it's at—and this somehow, that his action occurs. If he's all out there in the action he'd be not performing properly. My wife is a dancer, and she tells me that this is true in dance, as well. There's a center

of quietness with it, which has to be known and held. If you lose that center, you are in tension and begin to fall apart.

The Buddhist Nirvana is a center of peace of this kind. Buddhism is a psychology, not a religion. It starts with the psychological problem of suffering. All life is suffering. There is, however, an escape from sorrow, the escape is Nirvana, which is a state of inner peace, serenity, and a peace somewhere, like heaven. It is right here, in the midst of the turmoil of life. It is the state you find when you are no longer driven to live by compelling desires, fears, and social commitments, when you have found your center of freedom and can act by choice out of that. Voluntary action out of this center is the action of the bodhisattvas—royal participants in the sorrows of the world. You are not a Buddha because you have released yourself from the graspers of fear, lust, and duties. These are the rulers of the world.

There is an instructive Tibetan Buddhist painting in which the so-called Wheel of Becoming is represented. In most stories, this painting would not appear inside the church but in the outer wall. What is shown is the mind's image of the world when you caught in the grip of the fear of the Lord. Earth, six realms of being are represented as spokes of the ever revolving wheel. One's life in one life, another, then in one, another of the gods in heaven, and a fourth of the six is being punished in hell. A birth realm is at the bottom of the wheel, animals, or Tiers. At the sixth rim, is the hungry ghosts, the souls of those in whose existence there was attachment, craving, and expectation. The hungry ghosts have enormous, ravenous beaks and pinpoint mouths. However, in the midst of each of these realms there is a Buddhist wanting the possibility of release and illumination.

In the hub of the wheel are three symbolic beasts—a pig, a cock, and a serpent. These are the powers that keep the wheel revolving again, force, desire, and malice. And then finally, the rim of the wheel represents the boundary between anyone's consciousness who is moved by the tread of powers of the hub and held in the grip of the fear of death. In the center, surrounding the hub and what is in the grip of the fear of death, there is a wheel, and what is known is the "three persons" are wheels descending in darkness and others ascending to illumination.

MOYERS: What is the illumination?

CAMPBELL: The illumination is the recognition of the radiance of one eternally through all things, whether in the vision of time, these things are judged as good or as evil. To illumine this, you must release yourself completely from judging the values of this world and testing the results. Judge not that you be not judged. We read in the words of Jesus: If the desire of perception were cleansed, we the Buddha, "man would see everything as it is, infinite."

MOYERS: That's a tough trip.

CAMPBELL: That's a heavenly trip.

MOYERS: But is this really just for saints and monks?

CAMPBELL: No, it is for everyone. The real artist is the one who has learned to recognize and to render what force has created the radiance of a human, is metaphorically showing forth the truth.

MOYERS But doesn't this leave a lot of the rest of us ordinary mortals back on shore?

CAMPBELL I don't think there is any such thing as an ordinary mortal. Everybody has his own possibility of rights to the experience of life. All he has to do is recognize it and then cultivate it and get going with it. I always feel uncomfortable when people speak about ordinary mortals because I've never met an ordinary man, woman, or child.

MOYERS But is art the only way one can achieve this illumination?

CAMPBELL Art and religion are the two recommended ways. I don't think you get it through sheer academic philosophy, which gets all tangled up in concepts. But just living with one's heart open to others in compassion is a way wide open to all.

MOYERS So the experience of illumination is available to anyone—not just saints or artists. But if it is potentially in everyone, as deep in that unlocked memory box, how do you unlock it?

CAMPBELL You unlock it by getting somebody to help you unlock it. Do you have a dear friend or good teacher? It may come from an actual human being, or from an experience, like an automobile accident, or from an illumination, like this. In my own life, much of it comes from books, though I have had a long series of magnificent teachers.

MOYERS When I read your work, I think, "Movers: what mythology has done for you is to place you on a branch of a very ancient tree. You're part of a society of the living and dead that came along before you were here and will be here long after you are gone. It nourished you and protected you, and you have to nourish it and protect it in return."

CAMPBELL Well, it's been a wonderful support for me. Let me tell you. It's been tremendous what this kind of resource pouring into my life has done.

MOYERS But people ask, isn't a myth a lie?

CAMPBELL No, myth logic is not a lie, mythology is poetry; it's metaphorical. It has been well said that mythology is the penultimate truth—penultimate because the ultimate cannot be put into words; it's beyond words, beyond images, beyond that wonderful realm of the Buddhist Wheel of Becoming. Mythology patches the mind beyond that rim, to what can be known but not told. So this is the penultimate truth.

It's important to deal with the experience, and therefore the knowledge, of it is mystery and of your own mystery. This gives us a new balance, a new harmony, a new appendage. Thinking in mythological terms helps to put you in accord with the inevitabilities of this vale of tears. You learn to recognize the positive values in what appear to be the negative moments and aspects of your life. The big question is whether you are going to be able to say a hearty yes to your adventure.

MOYERS The adventure of the hero?

CAMPBELL Yes, the adventure of the hero—the adventure of being alive.



Early Goddess

$$U_{\alpha} = \{u \in U : u \leq \alpha\} \quad U_{\beta} = \{u \in U : u \leq \beta\} \quad U_{\alpha\beta} = \{u \in U : u \leq \alpha \wedge u \leq \beta\}$$


She Separating Nuts and Nuts

[illegible]

VI

THE GIFT OF THE GODDESS

Myths of the Great Goddess teach compassion for all living beings. There you come to appreciate the real sanctity of the earth itself, because it is the body of the Goddess.



MOYERS: The Lord's Prayer begins, "Our Father which art in Heaven . . ." Could it have begun "Our Mother"?

CAMPBELL: This is a symbolic image. All of the references to religious and mythological images are to planes of consciousness, or fields of experience that are potential in human spirit. And these images evoke attitudes and experiences that are appropriate to a meditation on the mystery of the source of your own being.

There have been systems of religion where the mother is the prime parent, the source. The mother is really a more intimate parent than the father because life is born from the mother. And the first experience of any infant is the mother. I have frequently thought that mythological images are a return to the mother image. We talk of Mother Earth. And in Egypt with the Mother Heavens, the Goddess Nut, who is represented as the whole heavenly sphere.

MOYERS: I was seized in Egypt upon first seeing the figure of Nut in the ceiling of one of those temples.

CAMPBELL: Yes, I know the temple.

primitive societies was directed toward the Chickadee figure—the Great Goddess, the mother earth—what happened to that?

CAMPBELL: Well, that was associated primarily with agriculture and the agricultural societies. It has to do with earth. The human woman gives birth just as the earth gives birth to the plants. She gives nourishment, as the plants do. So woman magic and earth magic are the same. They are related. And the personification of the energy that gives birth to forms and nourishes forms is properly female. It is in the agricultural world of ancient Mesopotamia, the Egyptian Nile, and in the earlier planting culture systems that the Goddess is the dominant mythic form.

We have found hundreds of early Europe in Asia that figures of the Goddess, but hardly anything there of the male figure at all. The bull and certain other animals, such as the bear and the goat, may appear as symbols of the male power, but the Goddess was the only visual occurrence at that time.

And when you have a Goddess as the creature it's her own body that is the universe. She is identical with the universe. That's the sense of that Goddess Nut figure that you saw in the Egyptian temple. She is the whole sphere of the life-enclosing heavens.

MOYERS: There is one scene of the Goddess swallowing the sun. Remember?

CAMPBELL: The idea is that she swallows the sun in the west and gives birth to the sun in the east, and it passes through her body at night.

MOYERS: So it would be natural for people trying to explain the wonders of the universe to look to the female figure, is the explanation of what they see in their own lives?

CAMPBELL: Not only that, but when you move to a philosophical point of view, as in the Goddess religions of India, where the Goddess symbolism is dominant to this day—the female represents *maya*. The female represents what in Kantian terminology we call the forms of sensibility. She is time and space itself, and the mystery beyond her is beyond all pairs of opposites. So it isn't male and it isn't female. It neither is nor is not. But everything is within her, so that the gods are her children. Everything you can think of, everything you can see, is a production of the Goddess.

I once saw a marvelous scientific movie about protoplasm. It was a revelation to me. It is in movement all the time flowing. Sometimes it seems to be flowing this way and that, and then it shapes things. It has a potentiality for bringing things into shape. I saw this movie in northern California, and as I drove down the coast to Big Sur, all the way as I could see was protoplasm in the form of grass being eaten by protoplasm in the form of cows, protoplasm in the form of birds eating protoplasm in the form of fish. You just got this wonderful sense of the abyss from which all has come. But each form has its own intentions, its own possibilities, and that's where meaning comes. Not in the protoplasm itself.

MOYERS: We are right back, then, to the Indians, who believe that the informing life and energy of all things is the earth. You quote those lines from the Upanishads: "Thou art the dark blue bird, and the green parrot with red eyes. Thou hast the lightning as its child. Thou art the season and

MOYERS: His overwhelming inborn sexuality takes away and negates sensual character.

AMBER: Yes. The death of the Goddess is related to the fact that you're born from your mother, and your father may be unknown to you. Your father may have died before you're this young when you're born. His father has died, or his father's in some other place, and now the hero has to go in quest of his father.

AMBER: In the story of the infant Jesus, is this the father of Jesus who is in heaven, at least in terms of the story? Well, Jesus has to rise or he is in the way to the father, leaving the mother behind. And the cross, which is symbolic of the earth, is the mother symbol. So, in the case of Jesus, he was his body on the mother, from which he has acquired his body, and he goes to the father, who is the ultimate transcendent mystery source.

MOYERS: What impact has this myth, cast down through the centuries?

CAMPBELL: It's a major theme in myth. There's a little more that appears in many narratives about a hero's life where the boy says, "Mother, who is my father?" She will say, "Well, you're not in such and such a place," and then he goes on the father quest.

In the classical Odysseus story, Odysseus is a hero who goes with Odysseus goes off to the Trojan War. The war lasts for ten years, and then, on a journey home, Odysseus is lost for ten more years in the mysterious world of the myth. He's a Mediterranean Athenian, goes to Ithaca, who is only twenty years old, and says, "Who find your father?" He doesn't know where his father is. He goes to Nestor and asks, "Where do you think my father would be?" And Nestor says, "Well, go ask Proteus." He's on the father quest.

MOYERS: In Star Trek, like Skywalker versus his companions, "I wish I had known my father." There's something powerful in the image of the father quest. But why no mother quest?

CAMPBELL: Well, the mother's right there. You're born from your mother, and she's the one who nurses you and nurtures you and brings you up to the age when you must find your father.

Now, the finding of the father has to do with finding what you are, your and destiny. There's a notion that the character is inherited from the father, and the body and very often the mind from the mother. But it's your character that's the mystery, and your character is your destiny. So it is the discovery of your destiny that is symbolized by the father quest.

MOYERS: So when you find your father, you find yourself?

AMBER: Well, have the word in English, "identification" with the father. You remember it's story of Jesus in Jerusalem when he's a little boy about twelve years old. His parents want for him, and when they find him in the temple in conversation with the doctors of the law, they ask, "Why did you abandon us this way? Why did you give us this fear and anxiety?" And he says, "Didn't you know I had to be about my father's business?" He's twelve years old—that's the age of the adolescent initiations finding who you are.

MOYERS: But what happens along the way to this revelation that in

- A. Birth image.
B. Owl goddess of regeneration.

The female represents who in Kanak terminology we call the "terms of sensibility." She is time and space itself, and she reaches beyond her as beyond as parts of opposition. So is the male and female. Everything is within her, so that the gods are her children.



the seas. Having no beginning, that is, it abide with immortality, whereas all things are born." That is this question: that we and the earth are the same?

But wasn't it inevitable that this even would disunite the world?—the entire disunites. We know now that plants don't grow out of the bodies of dead people, they grow according to the laws of seeds, and so on, and so on. Didn't Newton kill myth?

AMFIBEL: Oh, I think myth is coming back. There's a young scientist today who's using the term "morphogenetic field"—the field that produces forms. That's why the cuckoo is the form that produces forms.

MOYERS: What's the significance for us?

AMFIBEL: Well, it means to find what is the source of your own life, and what is the relationship of your body, your physical form, of the energy that animates it. The body without the energy is a corpse, isn't it? So you distinguish in your own life that which is of the body and that which is of energy and consciousness.

In India, the most common ultimate symbol is of the phallus—that is, as they call it, of the generating and penetrating the vertical of the yoni as they call it, of the Goddess. In contemplating this symbol, you're contemplating the generating moment itself of all life. The entire mystery of the generation of life is symbolically contemplated in that sign.

You see, the sexual mystery of union, and in most of the world, is a holy mystery. It is the mystery of the generating force. The act of generating a child is a cosmic act, and is to be understood as such. And so the symbol that most intimately represents this mystery of the pouring of the energy of life into the field of life is the lingam, and this is of the male and female powers in creative conjunction.

MOYERS: What would it have meant to us if somewhere along the way we had begun to pray to "Our Mother" instead of "Our Father"? What psychological difference would it have made?

AMFIBEL: It certainly has made a psychological difference in the character of our culture. For example, the first births, Western culture, in occurred in the great river valleys—the Nile, the Tigris-Euphrates, the Indus, and later the Ganges. That's still the world of the goddess. The name of the river Ganges (Ganga) is the name of a goddess, for example.

And then there came the invasions. Now, these started very early in the fourth millennium B.C., and became more and more devastating. They came in from the north and from the seas and wiped out cities overnight. We read the story in the Book of Genesis of the part played by Jacob's tribe in the fall of the city of Shechem. Overnight, the city was wiped out by these herding people who have suddenly appeared. The Semite invaders were herders of goats and sheep, the indigenous people of the Near East were hunters and so the cultures are essentially an individualism. When you have hunters, you have killers. And when you have herders, you have killers, because they're always in movement, always coming into contact with other people, and conquering them is inevitable, which they know. And how invasions bring on wars, it's just the other side of the coin. See? So the Near East

MOYERS: The sword and death instead of the plow and fertility?

CAMPBELL: That's right, and they are equated

MOYERS: There's a story you tell about the birth of the mother goddess Tiamat.

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CAMPBELL: I guess that could be taken as the key archetypal event here.

MOYERS: You called it a critical moment in history.

CAMPBELL: Yes. The Sumer people were making the world of the Mother Goddess systems, and so the male-oriented mythologies become dominant, and the Mother Goddess becomes, well, sort of a grandmother Goddess, way, way back.

It was in the time of the rise of the city of Babylon. And each of these early cities had its own protective god or goddess. The characteristic of an imperialistic people is to try to have its own local god dabbled big boy of the whole universe, you see. So other divinity counts. And the way to bring this about is by annihilating the god or goddess who was there before. Well, the one that was here before the Babylonian god Marduk was the Assyrian Mother Goddess. So the story begins with a great cosmic fight of the male gods up in the sky, each god a star, and they have heard that the Grandmother is coming. Ki Tiamat, the Abyss, the inexhaustible Source. She arrives in the form of a great fish or dragon, and what god will have the courage to go against Grandmother and dethrone her? And the one who has the courage, so it course, the god of our present great city. He's the big one.

So when Tiamat opens her mouth, the young god Marduk of Babylon sends winds into her throat and belly that blow her to pieces, and he then dismembers her and fashions the earth and heavens out of the parts of her body. This motif of dismembering a primordial being and turning its body into the universe appears in many mythologies in many forms. In India it comes up with the figure of Purusha, the reflection of whose body is the universe.

Now, the mother goddess in old mother goddess mythologies was herself already the universe, so the great creative deed of Marduk was a superior-gatory act. There was no need for him to cut her up and make the universe out of her, because she was already the universe. But the male-oriented myth takes over, and he becomes—apparently—the creator.

MOYERS: And the interest turned from the Goddess to her son, this young political upstart who—

CAMPBELL: Well, the interest turned to the interest specifically of the male governors of the city of Babylon.

MOYERS: So the matriarchal society began to give way to a—

CAMPBELL: Oh, by that time, 1750 B.C. or so—it was finished.

MOYERS: There are women today who say that the spirit of the Goddess has been in exile for five thousand years, since then—

CAMPBELL: You can't put it that far back, five thousand years. She was a very potent figure in Hellenistic times, in the Mithraic religions, and she came back with the Virgin in the Roman Catholic tradition. You don't have a tradition with the Goddess celebrated any more beautifully and marvelously than in the twelfth and thirteenth-century French cathedrals, every one of which is called Notre Dame.

MOYERS: Yes, but all of those myths and themes were created by males—priests, bishops—who excluded women, so whatever the term might have meant to the believer, for the purpose of power the image was in the hands of the dominant male figure.

CAMPBELL: You can put an accent on it that way, but I think it's a little too strong because there were the great female saints, the legends of Britain—she was a match for Alexander III. And Emperor Augustine—I don't think there is anybody in the Middle Ages who has the spirit to match hers. One now can work back and get after with the whole situation, but the situation of women was not that bad by any means.

MOYERS: No, but none of those saints would ever become pope.

CAMPBELL: Becoming pope, that's not much of a job, really. That's a business position. None of the popes could ever have become the mother of Christ. There are different roles to play. It was the males' job to protect the women.

MOYERS: That's where the paternalistic idea grew.

CAMPBELL: Women are booty, they are goods. With the fall of a city, every woman in the city would be raped.

MOYERS: There's this ethical contradiction mentioned in your book, quoting Exodus: "Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not cover thy neighbor's wife—except abroad. Then you should put all thy sword to the sword, and the women you shall take as booty to yourself." That's right out of the Old Testament.

CAMPBELL: Deuteronomy. Those are fierce passages.

MOYERS: And what do they say to you about women?

CAMPBELL: They say more about Deuteronomy than about women. The Hebrews were absolutely ruthless with respect to their neighbors. But this passage is an extreme statement of something that is inherent in most sociologically oriented mythologies. That is to say, love and compassion are reserved for the in-group, and aggression and abuse are projected outward on others. Compassion is to be reserved for members of your own group. The out-group is to be treated in a way described there in Deuteronomy.

Now, today there is no out-group anymore on the planet. And the problem of a modern religion is to have such compassion work for the whole of humanity. But then what happens to the aggression? This is a problem that the world is going to have to face, because aggression is a natural instinct just as much as—and more immediate than—compassion, and it's always going to be there. It's a biological fact. Of course, in biblical times, when the Hebrews came in they really wiped out the Goddess. The term for the Canaanite goddess that's used in the Old Testament is "the Asherah." Apparently, throughout the period represented in the Book of Kings, for example, there was a back-and-forth between the two cults. Many of the Hebrew kings are condemned in the Old Testament for having worshiped on the mountains. Those mountains were symbols of the Goddess. And there was a very strong accent against the Goddess in the Hebrew, which you do not find in the Indo-European mythologies. Here you have Zeus marrying the Goddess, and then the two play together. So it's in

*Leda and the Swan,
L. Bacchiacca
(1494-1557).*

*There was a strong accent
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Zeus marrying the Goddess
and then the two play
together.*



extreme case that we have in the Bible, and our own Western subjugation of the female is a function of biblical thinking.

MOYERS: Because when you substitute the male for the female, you get a different psychology, a different cultural bias. And it's permissible in your culture to do what your gods do, so you just . . .

AMTBELL: That's exactly it. You'd see three stages here. First, the early one, of the Goddess, when the male shares a significant divinity. Then the reverse, when the male takes over her role. And finally, rises the Cassia stage, where the two are in interaction as they are also, for example, in India.

MOYERS: Where does that arise?

CAMPBELL: It comes from the attitude of the Indo-Europeans, who did not completely devalue the female principle.

MOYERS: What about the virgin birth? Suddenly, the Goddess reappears in the form of the chaste and pure vessel chosen for God's act in

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CAMPBELL: In the history of Western religions, this is an extremely interesting development. In the Old Testament you have a God who creates a world without a goddess. Then all of a sudden, in the Psalms, there is a Sophia, the Goddess of Wisdom, who says, "When He created the world, was there, and I was His greatest joy." But in the Hebrew tradition the idea of a son of God is repulsive. It is not considered at all. The Messiah as the son of God is not what God's will. He is the who in his character and dignity is worthy to be literal to the son of God. I'm sure there's no idea of a virgin birth in that tradition. The virgin birth comes into Christianity by way of the Greek tradition. When you read the four gospels, for example, the only one in which the virgin birth appears is the Gospel According to Luke, and Luke was a Greek.

MOYERS: And in the Greek tradition there were tales, legends, myths of virgin births?

CAMPBELL: Oh, yes. Leda and the swan, Persephone and the serpent, and this one and that one and the other one. The virgin birth is represented throughout.

MOYERS: This was not a new idea, then, in Bethlehem. But what is the meaning of the virgin birth?

CAMPBELL: I think the best way to answer that is to talk about a system they have in India that describes stages of spiritual development. In India, there is a system of seven psychological centers up the spine. They represent psychological planes of concern and consciousness and action. The first is at the rectum, representing a maintaining, the basic, life-sustaining function. The serpent, well, represents this compulsion—as a kind of craving, esophagus going along just eating, eating, eating. None of us would be here if we weren't forever eating. What you eat is always something that just a moment before was alive. This is the sacramental mystery of food and eating, which doesn't then come to us in this when we sit ourselves down to eat. If we say grace before meals, we thank this figure out of the Bible that we eat. But in earlier mythologies, when people would sit down to eat, they would thank the animal that is about to be consumed for having given of itself as a willing sacrifice.

There's a wonderful saying in one of the Upanishads. "Oh wonderful, oh wonderful, oh wonderful. I am food, I am food, I am food. I am an eater of food, I am an eater of food. I am an eater of food. We drink this that was today, eat of this yesterday. But holding on to yourself and not letting yourself become food is the primary life-denying negative act. You're stopping the flow. And a yodging it, the flow is the great mystery experience that gives you the feeling of an animal that is about to be eaten for having given of itself. You, too, will be given in time.

MOYERS: I'm nature, nature is me.

CAMPBELL: Yes. Now the second psychological center is symbolized in the lid on a casket, + spiritual level, penetrates the sex organs, which is to say the origin of procreation. A third center is at the level of the navel, and here is the center of the will to power, to mastery and achievement, or, in its negative aspect, to the conquering, mastering, smashing, and trashing of others. This is the domain of aggressive function. And as we are given to recognize in the symbolism of the lid on a psychological system—the first function of mentalization, is of an animal instinct, the second, procreation, is of an animal instinct, and the third, mastery and conquest, is also of an animal instinct—and these three centers are located symbolically in the pelvic basin.

The next, or fourth, center is at the level of the heart, and this is of the opening to compassion. Here you move out of the field of animal action into a field that is properly human and spiritual.

And for each of these four centers there is an associated symbolic form. At the base, for example, the first one, the symbol is the phallus and womb—the male and female organs in conjunction. And at the heart center, there is again the organ and womb, that is to say, male and female organs in conjunction, but here they are represented in good as symbolic of the virgin birth—that is to say, it is the virtue of spirit—born out of the animal man.

MOYERS: And it happens—

CAMPBELL: It happens when you move at the level of the heart to compassion—compassion, sharing, experienced participation in the suffering of another person. That's the beginning of humanity. And the meditations of religion properly are at that level, the heart level.

MOYERS: You say that's the beginning of humanity. But in these stories, that's the point at which gods are born. The virgin birth—it's a god who emerges.

CAMPBELL: And do you know what that god is? It's you. All of these symbols in mythology refer to you. You're not stuck out there, and think it's all out there. So you're thinking about Jesus with all the sentiments relevant to how he suffered out there. But that suffering is what ought to be going on in you. Have you been spiritually reborn? Have you died to your animal nature and come to life as a human creature of compassion?

MOYERS: Why is it significant that this is of a virgin?

CAMPBELL: The begotten is of the spirit. This is a spiritual birth. The virgin conceived of the word through the ear.

MOYERS: The word came like a shaft of light.

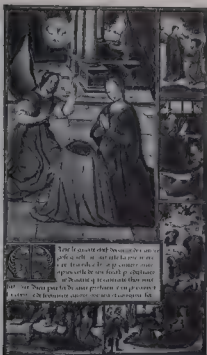
CAMPBELL: Yes. And the Buddha, with the same meaning, is said to have been born from his mother's side from the level of the heart chakra.

MOYERS: Heart chakra meaning

CAMPBELL: Ah, the heart chakra is the symbolic center associated with the heart. The chakra means "circle" or "sphere."

MOYERS: So the Buddha comes out—

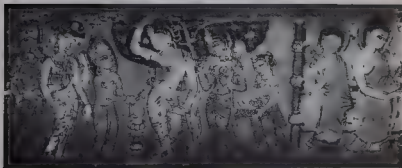
CAMPBELL: The Buddha is born from his mother's side. That's a



A. *Annunciation and Infancy of Christ*, Antoine Dufour, ca. 1505.

B. *Scenes from the Life of Buddha*, detail of Indian manuscript cover.

The virgin birth represents the birth of compassion at the heart—the birth of spiritual man, not a physical man. This is a spiritual birth—the Virgin conceived of the word through the ear. And the Buddha, with the same meaning, is said to have been born from his mother's side from the level of the heart chakra.



symbolic birth. He wasn't physically born from his mother's side, but symbolically.

MOYERS: But the Christ came the way you and I did.

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CAMPBELL: Yes, but of a virgin. And then, according to Roman Catholic doctrine, her virginity was restored, so nothing happened physically, you might say. What is symbolically referred to is not Jesus' physical birth but his spiritual significance. That's what the virgin birth represents. Heroes and demigods are born that way as beings motivated by compassion and not mastery, sexuality, or self-preservation.

This is the sense of the second birth, when you begin to live out of the heart center. The lower three centers are not to be related but transcended, when they become subject to and servant to the heart.

MOYERS: If we go back into antiquity, do we find images of the Madonna as the mother of the savior or child?

CAMPBELL: The antique model for the Madonna, actually, is Isis with Horus at her breast.

MOYERS: Isis?

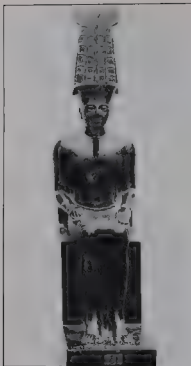


Isis suckling Horus.

The earlier model for the Madonna is this statue of Isis at her breast.

Statue of Amari Ra.

The Pharaoh sits on the throne, which is his, as a child on its mother's lap. At Chartres Cathedral, you will see an image of the Madonna as the throne upon which the child Jesus sits and blesses the world as its Emperor. That is precisely the image that has come down to us from most ancient Egypt.



upon her dead husband, and conceives. This is a motif that appears in the ancient mythology all the time under many symbolic forms—out of dawn comes life. When the barge has ended, the Goddess gives birth in the papyrus swamp to her child Horus, and it was the figure of this divine mother with her child conceived of God that became the model for the Madonna.

MOYERS: And the swallow became, did it not, the dove?

CAMPBELL: Well, the dove, the bird in flight, is a pretty nearly universal symbol of the spirit, as in Christianity, of the Holy Ghost—

MOYERS: associated with the sacred mother?

CAMPBELL: With the mother as conceiving of the spirit, yes. But one more little detail here. The sea is younger brother, Seth, meanwhile, has usurped the throne of Osiris. However, perfectly to represent the throne he

should marry Isis. In Egyptian cosmogony Isis represents the throne. The Pharaoh sits on the throne, which is why his children sit on thrones, too. And so, when you sit on the throne the cardinal of Chartres would see over one of the portals of the western front an image of the Madonna as the throne upon which the child Jesus sits and blesses the world with his omnipotence. That is precisely the image that has come down to us from most ancient Egypt. The early fathers in the early centuries took over these images and turned them into

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MOYERS: The Christian fathers took the image of Isis?

CAMERON: Definitely. They say so themselves. Read the text where it is declared that "those forms which were merely mythological forms in the past are now actual and incarnate in our Savior." The mythologies have referred to were of the dead and resurrected god Anus, Adonis, Tammuz, Osiris, etc., etc., one after the other. The death and resurrection of the god is everywhere associated with the human which dies and is resurrected every month. It is for two nights or three days dark, and we have a Christ for two nights, or three days in the tomb.

No one knows what the actual date of the birth of Jesus might have been, but it has been put in what is said to be the date of the winter solstice, December 25, when the nights begin to be shorter and the days longer. That is the moment of the rebirth of light. It was exactly the date of the birth of the Persian God of light, Mithra, Sol, the Sun.

MOYERS: What does this say to you?

CAMERON: It says to me that there is a life of death in the past and birth to the future in our lives and out of the life of death to the future and birth to the spiritual. These symbols are telling us about this one way or another.

MOYERS: So Isis is like to say, I imagine that is the universal fact of all things, Mistress and governess of all the elements, of all the powers, divine, queen of all that are in hell, but principal of all that dwell in heaven. Manifested as one and under one form — the goddess and Goddesses.

CAMERON: That is a very fine statement of this whole theme. That comes in Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, second century A.D. The golden Ass is one of the first novels by the way, its ending characteristically has been by a cat and man's converted into an ass, and he has to undergo an ordeal of pain and huge frightening adventures until he reaches prison, snatched through the grace of the goddess Isis. She appears with a rose in her hand, symbol of life, love, not lust, and when man was a cat in this way, he is converted back into a man. But he shows more than man in his situation — incarnated man, a saint. He has experienced the second virgin birth, you see. So, from material, he certainly, one may say, the very spiritual death and become reborn. The second birth is an inward spiritual, a renewed incarnation.

And the Goddess is the deity-bringer this about. The second birth is through a spiritual mother, Notre Dame de Paris, Notre Dame of Chartres — our Mother Church. We are reborn spiritually by entering the living church.

MOYERS: There is a power that is greater than any principle.

CAMERON: In that way it has been put that way, but is not necessarily

near to her. You can have your myriads of the same, so. But using this system of symbols, the woman becomes the regenerator.

AMERIS: So when the Council of Ephesus met in the year 431 to mark the death of Christ and proclaimed Mary to be the Mother of God, it was the first time?

AMERIS: Not in fact that important and nothing new in the Church for some time, but the place where this decision was made, at Ephesus, happened to be taken to be the greatest temple city in the Roman Empire at the Goddess Artemis or Diana. And there is a story that when the council was in session, passing this point, the people of Ephesus turned pocket knives and shouted in praise of Mary. The Goddess is Goddess—course she's the Goddess."

Well, what you have then in the Virgin Mary is a counterweight of the patriarchal monotheistic system, the Messiah, Jesus, who is to unite the spiritual and temporal powers, and the Heavenly Goddess, the Virgin, is the dead and resurrected son in the Virgin, Goddess, a virgin birth. There were plenty of such saviors reborn.

In the Near East, the god who descended from the dead at one was originally a goddess. Jesus took over what is really the goddess, Mary, coming down in compassion. But when the Virgin becomes in being the vessel of the incarnation, she has herself already effected the redemption. It has become more common to present that the Virgin is a participant in her suffering, the suffering of her son. In the Catholic Church now I think she is called the "co-savior."

MOORE: What does it tell us about the relation of the male and female? For a long while in primitive societies, the female is the dominant mythical figure. That original myth is a subtle, agreeable, gentle, gentle, and soon were back to the female posing a role in creation and recreation. Does it say something about the basic yearning of men and women for each other?

AMERIS: Yes, but I think if you start in ancient Egypt. It is a very interesting thing to see that this Mother Goddess was the queen right across to the Indus Valley in India, from the Aegean to the Isles, she is the dominant figure. Then you have the gods beginning coming down from the north, into Asia, into Greece, Italy, and you have a new, mixed mythology coming in, along the line. In the East, the Aegean in Greece is the Hittite tradition, and then about the last three years when the Goddess begins coming back. There is actually in England, from about the seventh century on—which is just about the time she is coming back to force in the Aegean is well—when the Vedas goes on together, and they see a strange woman appearing down the way, kind of smoky fog, and they ask, "What's that?" None of them knows what it could be. Some of them suggests, "It's a god, but what that is." And he goes over to this smoky fog and says, "In Agni, the Lord of Fire, I am born of fire. Who are you?" And out of the fog there comes a strange, a woman, who takes on the ground, and a voice says, "Let's see you, I am fire." And he knows that he can't fight it. So he goes back to the other gods and says, "This lady is strange." We return, says the Lord, "What do you try?" So over to gods, and the same sort of thing takes place. In the Vedas, I think the

Wind, I can blow anything around. Again a storm is the sign. "Let me see you blow that!" And he can't. So he too returns. Then and in the greatest of the Vedic gods, approach her, but as he draws near, the apparition vanishes, and where it had been, a woman appears, a beautiful, mysterious woman who instructs the gods, revealing to them the mystery of the ground of their own being. That is the ultimate mystery of "being," she tells them, from which you boys yourselves have received your powers. And it can turn your powers off or on, as it wishes. The Indian name for that Being is *Aditi*, beings in *brahman*, which is a neutral noun, neither male nor female. And the Indian name for the woman is *Maya Shakti-Devi*, "Goddess/Giver of Life and Mother of Forms." And there is that Upon which she appears as the teacher of the Vedic gods themselves concerning the ultimate ground and source of their own powers and being.

MOYERS: It's the female wisdom.

CAMPBELL: It's the female as the giver of forms. She is the one who gave life to the forms and she knows where they came from. It is from that which is beyond male and female. It is from that which is beyond being and nothing. It both is and is not. It neither is nor is not. It is beyond all categories of thought and the mind.

MOYERS: There is that wonderful saying in the New Testament: "In Jesus there is no male or female." In the ultimate sense of things, there is neither.

CAMPBELL: It would have to be that Jesus represents the source of our being, we are all, as it were, thoughts in the mind of Jesus. He is the word that has become flesh in us, too.

MOYERS: You and I possess characteristics that are both male and female?

CAMPBELL: The body does. I don't know anything about the actual dating of a girl, but sometime in the fetal period it becomes apparent that the child is going to be male, and this is going to be female. Meanwhile it's a body with the potentialities for either inflection.

MOYERS: So through life we are harnessing or suppressing one or the other.

CAMPBELL: And in that yin-yang figure from China, in the dark fish, or wherever you want to call it, there's the light spot. And in the light one there's a dark spot. That's how they can relate. You couldn't relate at all to something in which you did not somehow participate. That's why the idea of God as the Absolute Other is a ridiculous idea. There could be no relationship to the Absolute Other.

MOYERS: In this spiritual transformation that you're talking about, would the changes depend on those feminine characteristics such as nurturing, creativity, and collaboration instead of competitiveness? Isn't this at the heart of the feminine principle we're discussing?

CAMPBELL: Well, the mother over a her children, the stupid ones, the bright ones, the naughty ones, the good ones. It doesn't matter what their particular character is. So the feminine represents, in a way, the inclusive love for progeny. The father is more a disciplinarian. He's associated much more with the social order and the social character. This is actually

the way it works in societies. The mother gives birth to his nature, and the father gives birth to his social character, you might say, how he is to function.

So moving back toward nature will certainly bring forth the mother principle again. How it will relate to the patriarchal principle I do not know, because the organization of the planet is going to be an enormous operation, and that's the main function. So that you can't predict what the new thing is going to be. But certainly nature is coming back.

MOYERS: So when we say, "Save the earth," we're talking about saving ourselves.

AMPREL: Yes. A little hope for something happening in society has to wait for something in the human psyche, a whole new way of experiencing a society. And the crucial question here, as I see it, is simply: With what society, what social group do you identify yourself? Is it going to be with all the people of the planet, or is it going to be with your own particular group? This is the question, essentially. If it was in the mind of the founders of our nation when the people of the thirteen states began thinking of themselves as of one nation, yet without losing consideration for the special interests of each of the several states. Why can't something of that kind take place in the world right now?

MOYERS: A question arises in discussing all this—the male/female principle, the virgin birth, the spiritual power that gives us the second birth. The wise people of all times have said that we can't live the good life if we learn to live spiritually. But how does one learn to live spiritually? He is, of the flesh. Paul said, "The desires of the flesh are against the spirit and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh." How do we learn to live spiritually?

CAMPBELL: In ancient times, that was the business of the teacher. He was to give you the clues to a spiritual life. That is what the priest was for. Also, that was what ritual was for. A ritual can be defined as an enactment of a myth. By participating in a ritual, you are actually experiencing a mythological life. And it's out of this participation that one can learn to live spiritually.

MOYERS: These stories of mythology actually point the way to the spiritual life?

AMPREL: Yes, you've got to have a clue. You've got to have a road map of some kind, and these are all the roads. But they are not all the same. Some speak only of the interests of this group, point that way or that way, of that. Others, and especially those that are given as revelations of the Great Goddess, mother of the universe and of all, teach compassion for all living beings. Then also you come to appreciate the real sanctity of the earth itself, because it is the body of the Goddess. When Adonis creates, he creates part of the earth and becomes like a reborn, formed body. He is not himself there present in that form. But the Goddess is with him, we are with it, your body is of her body. There is in these mythologies a recognition of that kind of universal identity.

MOYERS: That's why I'm not so sure the future—the race and the salvation of the journey is in space. I think it might be right here on earth, in the body, in the womb of our being.

CAMPBELL: Well, it certainly is. When you go out into space what you're carrying is your body, and if that hasn't been transformed, space won't transform you. But thinking about space may help you to realize something. There's a two-page spread in a weekly atlas which shows our galaxy with many galaxies, and within our galaxy the solar system. And here you get a sense of the magnitude of this space that we're now finding out about. What those pages opened to me was the vastness of a universe of unimaginable magnitude and inconceivable silence. Billions upon billions of roaring thermonuclear furnaces scattering in on each other. Each thermonuclear furnace a star, and our sun among them. Many of them actually blowing themselves to pieces, littering the outermost reaches of space with dust and gas out of which new stars with circling planets are being born right now. And then from still more remote distances beyond all these there come murmurs, microwaves that are echoes of the greatest cataclysmic explosions of all—namely the big bang of creation, which according to some reckonings may have occurred some eighteen billion years ago.

That's where we are added, and to realize that, you realize how really important you are—you know—once you're in that great magnitude. And then must come the experience that you and that are in some sense one, and you partake of all of that.

MOYERS: And it begins here.

CAMPBELL: It begins here.



VIII

TALES OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE

*So through the eyes love attains the heart
For the eyes are the scouts of the heart
And the eyes go reconnoitering
For what it would please the heart to possess
And when they are in full accord
And form, all three, in the one resolve,
At that time perfect love is born
From what the eyes have made welcome to the heart
Not otherwise can love either be born or have commencement
Than by this birth and commencement moved by inclination*

*By the grace and by command
Of these three, and from their pleasure
Love is born, who its fair hope
Goes comforting her friends
For as all true lovers
Know love is perfect kindness
Which is born—there is no doubt—from the heart and eyes
The eyes make it blossom, the heart matures it
Love, which is the fruit of their very seed*

GILBERT DE BORNEILH (ca. 1138-1200?)



MOYERS: Love is such a vast subject that I will—I came to you and said, “Let’s talk about love,” where would you begin?

CAMPBELL: I’d begin with the troubadours in the twelfth century.

MOYERS: And who were they?

CAMPBELL: The troubadours were the nobility of Provence and then later other parts of France and Europe. In Germany they’re known as the

FACTS & FABLE

Page from the *Manersee Codex*, Troubadour Werner von Teufen.

The troubadours are the first ones in the West who really thought of love the way we do now—as a person-to-person relationship.

Minnesingers—the singers of love. *Minne* is the medieval German word for love.

MOYERS: Were they the poets of their age?

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CAMPBELL: They were poets of a certain character—yes. The period for the troubadours is the twelfth century. The whole troubadour tradition was extinguished in Provence in the so-called Albigensian Crusade of 1209, which was launched by Pope Innocent III, and which is regarded as one of the most monstrous crusades in the history of Europe.

The troubadours became associated with the Manichaean heresy of the Albigensians that was rampant at that time—though the Albigensian movement was really a protest against the corruption of the medieval clergy. So the troubadours and the transformation of the idea of love got mixed up in religious ide in a very complicated way.

MOYERS: The transformation of love? What do you mean?

CAMPBELL: The troubadours were very much interested in the psychology of love. And they're the first ones in the West who really thought of love the way we do now—as a person-to-person relationship.

MOYERS: What had it been before that?

CAMPBELL: Before that, love was simply *Eros*—the god who excites you to sexual desire. This is not the experience of falling in love the way the troubadours understood it. *Eros* is much more impersonal than falling in love. You see, people didn't know about *Amor*. *Amor* is something personal that the troubadours recognized. *Eros* and *Agape* are impersonal loves.

MOYERS: Explain.

CAMPBELL: *Eros* is a biological urge. It's the seal of the organs for each other. The personal factor doesn't matter.

MOYERS: And *Agape*?

CAMPBELL: *Agape* is love thy neighbor as thyself—spiritual love. It doesn't matter who the neighbor is.

MOYERS: Now, this is not passion in the sense that *Eros* mandates it; this is compassion, I would think.

CAMPBELL: Yes, it is compassion. It's a heart-opening. But it is not individuated as *Amor* is.

MOYERS: *Agape* is a religious impulse.

CAMPBELL: Yes. But *Amor* could become a religious impulse, too. The troubadours recognized *Amor* as the highest spiritual experience.

You see, the experience of *Eros* is a kind of seizure. In India, the god of love is a big figure, associated with a bow and a quiver of arrows. The names of the arrows are "Drawn by Agni" and "Open Up" and so forth. Really, he just drives this thing into you so that it's a total physiological, psychological, explosion.

Then the other love, *Agape*, is a love of the neighbor as thyself. Again, it doesn't matter who the person is. It is your neighbor, and you must have that kind of love.



Kamus Aama Has Flowered Bow at Radha as a Maid Fetches Krishna, India, seventeenth century.

In India, the god of love is a big, vigorous youth with a bow and a quiver of arrows. The names of the arrows are "Death-Bringing Agony" and "Open Up and so forth. It's a social, physiological, psychological explanation.

But with *Antar* we have a purely personal idea. The kind of action that comes from the meeting of the eyes, as they say in the traditional tradition, is a person-to-person experience.

MOYERS: There's a poem in one of your books about this meeting of the eyes: "So through the eyes love attains the heart."

CAMPBELL: That's completely contrary to everything the Church stood for. It's a personal, individual experience, and I think it's the essential thing that's great about the West and that makes it different from all other traditions I know.

MOYERS: So the courage to live became the courage to affirm one's own experience against tradition—the tradition of the Church. Why was that important in the evolution of the West?

CAMPBELL: It was important in that it gave the West this accent on the individual that one should have faith in his experience and not simply mouth terms handed down to him by others. It stresses the validity of the individual's experience of what humanity is, what life is, what values are, against the monolithic system. The monolithic system is a machine system; every machine works like every other machine that's come out of the same shop.

MOYERS: What did you mean when you wrote that the beginning of romantic love in the West was "arido over credo"?

CAMPBELL: Well, the credo says "I believe," and I believe not only in the laws, but I believe that these laws were instituted by God, and there's no arguing with God. These laws are a heavy weight on me, and disobeying these is sin and has to do with my eternal character.

MOYERS: That's the credo?

CAMPBELL: That's the credo. You believe, and then you get a confession and you run down through the list of sins, and you count yourself against

those—and instead of going into the priest and saying, “Bless me, father, for I have been great this week,” you meditate on the sins and on meditating on the sins, then you really become a sinner in your life. It’s a condemnation, actually, of the will to life, that’s what the credo is.

MOYERS: And lib do?

CAMPBELL: The libido is the impulse to life. It comes from the heart.

MOYERS: And the heart is—

CAMPBELL: The heart is the organ of opening up to somebody else. That’s the human quality as opposed to the animal qualities, which have to do with self-interest.

MOYERS: So you’re talking about romantic love as opposed to lust or passion, or a general religious sentiment?

CAMPBELL: Yes. You know, the usual marriage in traditional cultures was arranged for by the families. It wasn’t a person-to-person decision at all. In India to this day, you have columns in the newspapers of advertisements for wives that are put in by marriage brokers. I remember in one family that I knew there, the daughter was going to marry. She had never seen the young man she was going to marry, and she would ask her brothers, “Is he tall? Is he dark? Is he right? What?”

In the Middle Ages, that was the kind of marriage that was sanctified by the Church. And so the individual idea of real person-to-person. And it was very dangerous.

MOYERS: Because it was heresy?

DAVID PAGE

*Venus, Cupid, Folly,
and Time, U Bronzino
(1503–72).*

With Amor we have a purely personal ideal—the kind of seizure that comes from the meeting of the eyes.



*G. I. and Girlfriend in
Hyde Park, London.
Ralph Morse, 1944.*

*The true marriage springs from the recognition of identity in the other, and the physical union is simply the sacrament in which that is confirmed. It starts from the spiritual impact of love—
Amor.*



AMOR. Not only incest, it was adultery, what might be called spiritual adultery. Since the marriages were all arranged by society, the love that came from the meeting of the eyes was of a higher spiritual value.

For example, in the Tristan romance, Isolde is engaged to marry King Mark. They have never seen each other. Tristan is sent, secretly, by King Mark, Isolde's mother, to prepare a love potion so that the two who are to be married will have fallen in love with each other. And this love potion is put in the charge of the nurse, who is to go with Isolde. The love potion is left unguarded and Isolde and some knights drink it and they drink it. They're overladen with love, but they have already been in love. They just didn't know it. The love potion just touched their old remembrance that kind of experience from one's own youth.

The problem from the traditional point of view is that King Mark and Isolde, who are to be married, are not really qualified for love. They have never even seen each other. The true marriage is the marriage that springs from the recognition of identity in the other, and the passion that arises simply the sacrament in which that's confirmed. It doesn't start there, that was growing with the physical, started that then becomes spiritualized. It starts from the spiritual impact of love—Amor.

MURKIN. Christ spoke of it as a desire it wasn't the desire of the union that takes place spiritually, in the mind and heart.

AMOR. And every marriage was such a sacrament when it was arranged by the society and not by the heart. That's the sense of courtly love in the Middle Ages, it's a direct contrast to the way of the Church. The word AMOR, which backwards is ROMA, the Roman Catholic Church, which was arranging marriages that were so political and social in their character. And so came this movement of stating a free choice, what I call following your bliss.

But there's another use of the curse. In the Tristan romance, when the young couple has drunk that love potion and Isolde's nurse realizes what has happened, she goes to Tristan and says, "You have drunk a curse, death." And Tristan says, "By my death, if you mean this poison of love, because that was one of the main poisons that we should feel the sickness of love. There's no possibility of blame in this world of that century, no sexual sinning." Tristan says, "If by my death you mean this, a man of love, that's my life, if by my death you mean the punishment that we're to suffer if we've sinned, I accept that. And by my death, if you mean eternal punishment in the fires of hell, I accept that, too." Now, that's big stuff.

MURKIN. Especially if you have a conscience, who believe in a literal hell. So what's the significance of what Tristan was saying?

AMOR. What he was saying is that he gave it over to his fate and pain, even to hell. This is the attraction of the poem. The heroic way.

MURKIN. And he would choose this pain to live it out even though it might mean everlasting pain and damnation in hell.

AMOR. And I think that you're somewhat wrong, you're less should be chosen the punishment that is hell, can't hurt me, it's not the thing. And to suffer what happens, it's the punishment, it's not the hell.

MOYERS. And in choosing love, too?

CAMPBELL. In choosing love, too.

MOYERS. You wrote once that the point about hell, as about heaven, is that when you're there, you're in your proper place, which is finally where you want to be.

CAMPBELL. That was Bernard Shaw's idea, and really Dante's idea, and the punishment in hell is that you have freedom to do what you thought you wanted on earth.

MOYERS. Tristan wanted his love, he wanted his Miss, and he was willing to suffer for it.

CAMPBELL. Yes. But then William Blake says in his wonderful series of aphorisms *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "As I was walking among the fires of hell, which no angels look like torment" that is to say, for the people who are there, who are not angels, it's not the fire of pain, it's the fire of delight.

MOYERS. I remember in Dante's *Inferno*, as Dante is looking on the great lovers of history in hell, he sees Helen, and he sees Cleopatra, and he sees Tristan. What's the significance of that?

CAMPBELL. Dante is taking the Church's attitude that this is hell, and that they're suffering there. Remember, he sees the two young lovers in the Italy of his day, Paolo and Francesca. Francesca had a love affair with



Francesca da Rimini,
William Dyce
(1806–64).

Paolo and Francesca were sitting under a tree reading the story of Lancelot and Guinevere. "And when we read of their first kiss, we forked at each other and read no more in the book that day."

Paolo, the brother of her husband. And Dante, like a social scientist, says, "Darling, how did this happen? What brought this about?" And then come the most famous lines in Dante: Francesca says that Paolo and she were sitting under a tree in the garden reading the story of Lancelot and Guinevere. And when we read of their first kiss, we looked at each other and read no more in the book that day." And that was the beginning of their fall.

That this wonderful experience should be condemned as a sin is the thing the troubadour just says no to. Love is the meaning of life—it is the high point of life.

MOYERS: Is that what Wagner meant in his great opera on Tristan and Isolde when he said, "In this world let me have my world, to be damned with it or to be saved?"

CAMPBELL: Yes, that's exactly what Tristan said.

MOYERS: Meaning, I want my love, I want my life.

CAMPBELL: This is my life, yes. And I'm willing to take any kind of pain for it.

MOYERS: And this took a courage, didn't it?

CAMPBELL: Doesn't it? Even to think of it.

MOYERS: Doesn't it?—you put it in the present tense.

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: Even now?

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: You have said that the point of all these pioneers in love is that they decided to be the author and means of their own self-fulfillment—that the realization of love is to be nature's noblest work, and that they were going to take their wisdom from their own experience and not from dogma, politics, or any current concepts of sexual good. And is this the beginning of the romantic idea of the Western individual taking matters into his or her own hands?

CAMPBELL: Absolutely. You can see examples in Oriental stories of this kind of thing, but it did not become a social system. It has now become the ideal of love in the Western world.

MOYERS: Love in one's own experience—facing one's own experience as the source of wisdom?

CAMPBELL: Yes, that's the individual. The best part of the Western tradition has included a recognition of and respect for the individual as a living entity. The function of the society is to cultivate the individual. It is not the function of the individual to support society.

MOYERS: But what happens to institutions—to universities, to corporations, to churches, to the political institutions of our society—we all just run off and follow our love? Isn't there a tension in this? Individual versus society? There has to be some legitimate point beyond which individual intuition, the individual libido, the individual desire, the individual love

the individual impulse to do what you want to do must be restrained, otherwise you'd have tumult and anarchy, and no rest or tranquillity. Are you really saying that we should follow our bliss to wherever love wherever it leads?

CAMPBELL: Well, you've got to use your head. They say you know a narrow path is a very dangerous path—the razor's edge.

MOYERS: So the head and the heart should not be at war?

CAMPBELL: No, they should not. They should be in cooperation. The head should be present—and the heart should listen to it now and then.

MOYERS: Are there times when the heart is in the lead?

CAMPBELL: That would be the desirable situation most of the time. The five main virtues of the medieval knight might be brought in here. One is temperance, another is courage, another is love, another is loyalty, and another is courtesy. Courtesy is respect for the decorum of the society in which you are living.

MOYERS: No one doesn't guarding alone—love is attended by

CAMPBELL: It's one of a number of things. One way to go crazy is to have one function dominate the whole system and not serve the other. And the medieval idea in spite of the fact that these people were in protest against the ecclesiastical authorities was respect for the society in which they were participating. Everything was done according to rules. When two knights fought, they did not violate the rules of combat although they were engaged in mortal combat. This courtesy has to be held in mind.

MOYERS: Were there rules of love? Rules of love? Were there restraints on adultery, for example? If your eyes met someone who was not your wife or husband, what was to be your response in the medieval era?

CAMPBELL: Well, that was the beginning of the courtly love relationship. There were game rules there—and they played it according to the rules. They had their own system of rules. They were not those of the church, but they were rules for playing the game harmoniously, and with the restrictions that were intended. Anything would it makes a system of rules that state how a thing is to be done and done well. It is because I saw that art is the making of things well. And the conduct of a life that is well lived. The beauty is not in this, but how much more it have the knowledge of certain principles that enable the expression to become more eloquent and gratifying.

MOYERS: So the age of chivalry was growing up, is the age of romantic love was reaching out.

CAMPBELL: I'd say these were the same thing. It was a very serious period because it was terribly brutal. There was no control law. Every man was on his own, and, of course, there were great violations of everything. But within this brutality there was a code of ethics, which the women really represented because they were the ones who established the rules for the game. And the men had to play it according to the requirements of the women.

MOYERS: How did it happen that the woman had this power of influence?

CAMPBELL: Because I would want to make love to a woman, she's already got the upper hand. The technician's term for the woman's granting of herself was "merci." The woman grants her "merci," now that might consist in her permission to kiss her on the back of the neck once every Wednesday. You know, something like that. It might be a full going-in. We don't know. That would depend upon her estimate of the character of the candidate.

MOYERS: So there were rules to determine the testing?

CAMPBELL: Yes. There was an essential requirement: that one must have a gentle heart, that is, a heart capable of love, not simply of lust. The woman would be testing to find whether the candidate for her love had a gentle heart, whether he was capable of love.

We have to remember also that these ladies were all of the nobility, and the nobility in that time were pretty sophisticated and competent people, both in their brutality and in their tenderness. Today I don't know what one would do to test this, but perhaps to see if he had a gentle heart, or whether that would be ideal that someone would even write a letter to ask it.

MOYERS: What does the idea of the gentle heart suggest to you?

CAMPBELL: One that is capable of weeping. The key word for me is compassion.

MOYERS: Which means?

CAMPBELL: Suffering with. "Passion" is "suffering," and "com-" is with. The German word really gives it in a clearer way: *mitleid*, "with (mit) sorrow or suffering" (*leid*). The essential idea was to test this man to make sure that he would suffer things for love, and that this was not just lust.

MOYERS: Just that may have emerged in the troubadour period, but it was still alive and well in the early 1950s in East Texas.

CAMPBELL: That's the force of this position. It originated in twelfth-century Provence, and was going on in twentieth-century Texas.

MOYERS: It's been shattered. I have to tell you that I mean I'm not sure that it's as much of a test as it used to be. I was grateful for the test—I think I'm not sure.

CAMPBELL: The tests that were given then involved, for example, sending a chap out to build a bridge. The traffic in the Middle Ages was somewhat encumbered by these knights building bridges. But also the tests included going into battle. A woman who was too ruthless in asking her lover to sacrifice with her, if she would acquiesce in anything was considered "savage" or "savage." Also, the woman who gave herself with out the testing was "savage." There was a very rich psychological estimation game going on here.

MOYERS: The troubadours weren't aiming, with this, to dissolve marriages or the world, but was the eternal carnal narrative, just or even the quenching of the soul, if God forbid were. Rather they celebrated life directly in the experience of love as a redeeming, soul-mating force, opening the heart to the sad but sweet melody of being through love, one's way

anguish and one's own joy.⁴ They weren't trying to destroy things, were they?

CAMPBELL: Now you see that motive of power was not what was in them. It was the motive of personal experience and sublimation. It's quite different. There was no direct attack on the Church. The idea was to sublimate life into a spiritual plane of experiences.

MOYERS: Love is right in front of me. A door is the path directly before me, the eyes—

CAMPBELL: the meeting of the eyes, that goes *through* the eyes *into* the heart. For the eyes are the souls of the heart.

MOYERS: What was it that the troubadours learned about the psyche? We've heard about the psyche—Eros, *ved Psyche*—and we're told in our day that you must understand your psyche. What did the troubadours discover about the human psyche?

CAMPBELL: What they discovered was a certain individual aspect of it that cannot be talked about in purely general terms. The individual experience, the individual commitment to experience, the individual believing in his experience and living it—that is the main point here.

MOYERS: So love is not love in general. It is love for that woman?

CAMPBELL: For that one woman. That's right.

MOYERS: Why do you think we fall in love with one person and not another?

CAMPBELL: Well, I wouldn't be one to say. It's a very mysterious thing, that electric thing that happens, and then the agony that can follow. The troubadours celebrate the agony of the love, the sickness the doctors cannot cure, the wounds that can be healed only by the weapon that delivered the wound.

MOYERS: Meaning?

CAMPBELL: The wound is the wound *of* my passion and the agony of my love for this creature. The only one who can heal me is the one who delivered the blow. That's a motif that appears in symbolic form in many medieval stories of the lance that delivers a wound. It is only when that lance can touch the wound again that the wound can be healed.

MOYERS: Wasn't there something of this idea in the legend of the Holy Grail?

CAMPBELL: In the monastic version of the story, the Grail is associated with Christ's passion. The Grail is the chalice of the Last Supper and the chalice that received Christ's blood when he was taken from the cross.

MOYERS: What does the Grail represent then?

CAMPBELL: There's a very interesting statement about the origin of the Grail. One early writer says that the Grail was brought from heaven by the neutral angels. You see, during the war in heaven between God and Satan, between good and evil, some angels sided with Satan and some with God. The Grail was brought down through the middle by the neutral angels.

**Angels Carrying Grail,
from *The Playfair Book of Hours*, England,
fifteenth century.**

During the war in heaven between God and Satan, good and evil, some angels have sided with God and some with Satan. The Grail was brought down through the middle by the neutral angels. It represents that spiritual path that is between pairs of opposites, between fear and desire, between good and evil.



It represents that spiritual path that is between pairs of opposites, between fear and desire, between good and evil.

The theme of the Grail romance is that the land, the country, the whole territory of concern has been laid waste. It is called a waste and. . . And what is the nature of the wasteland? It is a land where everybody is living an inauthentic life—doing as other people do, doing as you are told, without courage for your own life. That is the wasteland. And that is what T. S. Eliot meant in his poem *The Waste Land*.

In a waste land, the Grail does not represent the territory of waste; it is supposed to be representing—and people are living inauthentic lives. "I've never done a thing I wanted to do in my life. I've done as I was told." You know?

MOYERS: And the Grail becomes?

AMORELL: The Grail becomes the—what can we call it?—that watch

is attained and realized by people who have loved the town-elves. The Grail represents the fulfillment of the highest spiritual potentialities of the human consciousness.

The Grail King, for example, was a lovely young man, but he had not earned the position of Grail King; he had stolen from his castle with the word "Amor!" We call that proper for youth, but it doesn't belong to the guardianship of the Grail. And as his lanceing forth, a Muslim or pagan knight, comes out of the woods. They do a love-thriller in each other, and they drive at each other. The lance of the Grail King is the pagan, but the pagan's lance castrates the Grail King.

What that means is that the Christian separation of matter and spirit, of the dynamism of life and the reality of the spirit, of nature and grace and supernatural grace, has really castrated nature. And the European mind, the European life, has been as a result emasculated by this separation. The true spirituality, which would have been the union of matter and spirit, has been killed. And then what does the pagan represent? He was a person from the suburbs of Eden. He was regarded as a foreigner, and on the head of his lance was written the word "Grail." That is to say, nature imposes the Grail. Spirituality is the helper, the perfume, the flowering and the fulfillment of a human life, not a supernatural virtue imposed upon it.

And so the impulses of nature are what give direction to the human rules coming from a supernatural authority. That is the sense of the Grail.

MOYERS: Is this what Thomas Mann meant when he talked about mankind being the noblest work because it is a nature and spirit?

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: Nature and spirit are working together, rather to meet in this experience. And the Grail—that these romantic legends were searching for—is the union once again of what has been divided, the peace that comes from joining.

CAMPBELL: The Grail becomes symbolic of an authentic life that is you in terms of its own life; it is in terms of its own unique system of energies that is between the pairs of opposites of good and evil, light and dark. One writer of the Grail legend starts his long epic with a short poem saying,

"Every act has both good and evil results." Every act in life yields pairs of opposites in its results. The best we can do is lean toward the light toward the human relationships that come from a compassion with suffering. It is an understanding, the other person. This is what the Grail is about. And this is what comes out in the romance.

In the Grail legend young Lancelot is being brought up in the country by a mother who refused the courts and would have him to know nothing about the court rules. Lancelot's life is lived in terms of the dynamism of his own impulse system and he becomes more mature. Then he is offered a lovely young girl in marriage by her father, who is a trained knight to be a knight. And Percival says, "No, I am married already, not by given a wife. And that's the beginning of Europe."

MOYERS: The beginning of Europe?

CAMPBELL: Yes—the individual Europe, the Grail Europe.

Now when Percival comes to the Graal castle, he meets the Graal King, who's brought in on a stretcher, wounded, kept alive simply by the presence of the Graal. Percival's compassion moves him to ask, 'What ails you, Uncle?' But he doesn't ask the question because he has been taught by his instructor that a knight doesn't ask unnecessary questions. So he obeys the rule and the adventure fails.

And then it takes him five years of ordeals and embarrassments and all kinds of things to get back to that castle and ask the question that heals the king and heals society. The question is inexpressible, not of the rules of the society, but of compassion, the natural opening of the human heart to another human being. That's the Graal.

MOYERS: And it is a kind of love that—

CAMPBELL: Well, it is spontaneous compassion, a suffering with.

MOYERS: What was it Jung said—that the soul cannot exist in peace until it finds its other and the other is always a you? Is that what the romantic—

CAMPBELL: Yes, exactly, romantic. That's romance. That's what myth is all about.

MOYERS: Not a sentimental kind of romance?

CAMPBELL: No, sentiment is an echo of violence. It's not really a vital expression.

MOYERS: What do you think all of this says about romantic love? About our individual selves?

CAMPBELL: It says that we're in two worlds. We're in our own world, and we're in the world that has been given us outside, and the problem is to achieve a harmonious relationship between the two. We're in this society, so I've got to live in terms of this society, it's ridiculous not to live in terms of this society because unless I do, I'm not living. But I mustn't allow this society to dictate to me how I should live. One has to build up one's own system that may violate the expectations of the society, and sometimes society doesn't accept that. But the task of life is to live within the field provided by the society that is really supporting you.

A point comes up—for instance—a war, where the young men have to register for the draft. This involves an enormous decision. How far are you going to go in according to what the society is asking? How to tell other people whom you don't know? For what? For whom? All that kind of thing.

MOYERS: That's what I meant a minute ago when I said society couldn't exist if every heart were vagrant, every eye were wandering.

CAMPBELL: Yes, that's certainly so. But there are some societies that shouldn't exist, you know.

MOYERS: Sooner or later they—

CAMPBELL: Crack up.

MOYERS: The troubadours cracked up that old world.

CAMPBELL: I don't think it was they, really, who cracked it up.

MOYERS: It was love.

CAMPBELL: It was—well, it was much the same thing. Lucifer was in a way a trisubdour of Christ. He had his own sort of what I might call a priest. And that smashed up the medieval Church, really, it never recovered.

You know, it's very interesting to think of the history of Christianity. During the first five centuries, there were lots of Christians, lots of ways of being Christian. And then, in the person of Theodosius in the latter century, the way to salvation allowed in the Roman Empire is the Christian religion, and the only form of Christianity allowed in the Roman Empire was the Christianity of Byzantium's throne. The wonderful history of the destruction of the pagan temples of antiquity is hardly matched in world history.

MOYERS: Destroyed by the organized Church?

CAMPBELL: By the organized Church. And why didn't Christians live with another religion? What was the matter with them?

MOYERS: What do you think?

CAMPBELL: It's power, it's power, I think the power impulse is the fundamental impulse in European history. And it got into our religious traditions.

One of the very interesting things about the Celtic legends is that they occur about five hundred years after Christianity has been imposed upon Europe. They represent a coming together of two traditions.

Around the end of the twelfth century, the Abbot Joachim of Floris wrote of the three ages of the spirit. After the Fall in the Garden, he said, God had to compensate for the disaster and introduced the spiritual principle into history. He chose a race to become the vehicle of this communication, and that is the age of the Father and of Israel. And then this race, having been prepared as a priestly race, competent to become the vessel of the Incarnation, produces the Son. Thus the second age is of the Son and the Church, which is the same race but the vehicle of humanity is to receive the message of the spiritual will of God.

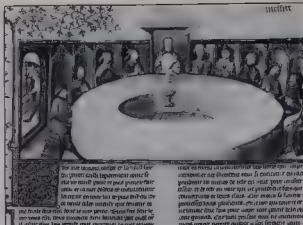
The third age, which this philosopher in the 1260's said was now about to begin, is the age of the Holy Spirit, who speaks directly to the individual. Anyone who incarnates or brings into his life the message of the Word is equivalent to Jesus—that's the sense of this third age. Just as Israel has been rendered irrelevant, the institution of the Church is the Church is rendered archaic by the individual experience.

That began a whole movement of humans going out, the first tests to receive the experience. The saint who's regarded is the first representative of this was St. Francis of Assisi, who represented the coming of the Christ, and who was himself a manifestation in the physical world of the Holy Spirit.

Now that's what I've heard the questing knight, the knight, had on his quest was equivalent to Christ. He was introduced to Arthur's court in flaming red armor, on the Feast of Pentecost, which is the feast of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles in the form of fire. Each of us can be a Cathad, you know. That's his position with respect to the message of Christianity. The two old documents, buried in the desert during the time of Theodosius, express this idea.

Galahad Comes to the Round Table, from a medieval manuscript.

Galahad was introduced to Arthur's Court as a young red warrior on the Feast of Pentecost, which is the feast of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in the form of fire. Each of us can be a Galahad. Jesus says, "He who drinks from my mouth will become as I am and I shall be he." That is the idea in those romances of the Grail.



In the Gnostic Gospel, According to Thomas, for example, Jesus says, "He who drinks from my mouth will become as I am and I shall be he." That is the idea in those romances of the Grail.

MCCYERS: You've said that what happened in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was one of the most important mutations of human feeling and spiritual consciousness—that a new way of experiencing love came into expression.

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MCCYERS: And it was in opposition to the ecclesiastical despotism over the heart that required people, particularly young girls, to marry whom ever the Church or the parents wanted them to marry. What had this done to the passion of the heart?

CAMPBELL: Well, to say a word for the other first, one has to recognize that in domestic life there grows up a love relationship between the husband and wife even when they're put together in an arranged marriage. In other words, in arranged marriages of this kind, there's a lot of love. There's family love, a rich love, on that level. But you don't get this other thing, of the seizure that comes in recognizing your soul's counterpart in the other person. And that's what the troubadours stood for, and that has become the ideal in our lives today.

But marriage is marriage, you know. Marriage is not a love affair. A love affair is a totally different thing. A marriage is a commitment to that which you are. That person is there, he's your other half. And you and the other are one. A love affair isn't that. That's a relationship for pleasure, and when it gets to be unpleasurable it's cut. But a marriage is a life commitment, and a

the commitment means the prime concern of your life. If marriage is not the prime concern, you're not married.

MOYERS: Does romance in marriage last?

CAMPBELL: In some marriages it does. In others, it doesn't. But the problem, you see, is the big word in this troubadour tradition is "loyalty."

MOYERS: What do you mean by loyalty?

CAMPBELL: Not cheating, not defecting—through whatever trials or suffering, you remain true.

MOYERS: The Puritans called marriage "the little church within the Church." In marriage, every day you love, and every day you forgive; it is an ongoing sacrament—love and forgiveness.

CAMPBELL: Well, the real word, I think, is "oneal," in its proper sense. That's the sublimation of the individual to something superior to itself. The real life of a marriage or of a true love affair is in the relationship, which is where you are, too. You understand what I mean?

MOYERS: No, I'm not clear on that.

CAMPBELL: Like the yin-yang symbol, you see. Here I am, and here she is, and here we are. Now when I have to make a sacrifice, I'm not sacrificing to her, I'm sacrificing to the relationship. Resentment against the other one is wrongly placed. Life is in the relationship, that's where your life now is. That's what a marriage is, whereas in a love affair, you have two lives in a more or less successful relationship to each other for a certain length of time, as long as it seems agreeable.

MOYERS: In the sacred marriage, what God has joined together is one and cannot be sundered by man.

CAMPBELL: It was one to begin with, and the marriage testifies that unity symbolically.

MOYERS: It was one to begin with?

CAMPBELL: Marriage is the synthetic recognition of our identity, two aspects of the same being.

MOYERS: You know the curious old legend of the blind prophet Tiresias?

CAMPBELL: Yes, that's a grand story. Tiresias was walking through the forest one day when he saw two copulating serpents. And he placed his staff between them and was transformed into a woman, and lived as a woman for a number of years. Then again, Tiresias the woman was walking through the forest when she saw two copulating serpents and placed her staff between them and was turned back into a man.

Well, one fine day on Capitol Hill, the Hill of Zeus—

MOYERS: Mount Olympus?

CAMPBELL: —Mount Olympus, yes. Zeus and his wife were arguing as to which enjoyed sex or intercourse the more, the male or the female. And of course nobody there could decide because they were only on one side of the net, you might say. Then someone said, "Let's ask Tiresias."

So they go to Tiresias, and they ask him the question, and he says, "Why, the woman, nine times more than the man." Well, for some reason that I don't really understand. Here the wife of Zeus took this badly and struck him blind. And Zeus, feeling a certain respectability, gave Ixion the gift of prophecy within his blindness. There's a good point there—when your eyes are closed, if it's striking phenomena, you're in your intuition, and you may come in touch with the metaphysics, the basic terms of things.

MOYERS: Well, what's the point, that Ixion, having been transformed into a man and then a woman by the serpents, had knowledge of both the female and the male experience and knew more than either the god or the goddess knew alone?

CAMPBELL: That's correct. Furthermore, he represented symbolically the fact of the unity of the two. And when Odysseus was sent to the underworld by Circe, his true nature came when he met Tiresias and realized the unity of male and female.

MOYERS: I've often thought that if you could get in touch with your feminine side—or if you're a woman, your masculine side, you would know what the gods know and maybe beyond what the gods know.

CAMPBELL: That's the information that one gets from being married. That's the way you get in touch with your feminine side.

MOYERS: But what happens to this state of very intense love when you meet someone else—and you suddenly hear, "I know that person" or "I want to know that person"?

CAMPBELL: That's very mysterious. It's almost as though the future life that you're going to have with that person has a tendency to you. This is the one whom you will have that life with.

MOYERS: Is that something coming from within our inventory of memories that we don't understand and don't recognize? Reaching out and being touched by that person in a way—

CAMPBELL: It's almost as though you were reacting to the future. It's talking to you from what's to be. This has to do with the mystery of time and the transcendence of time. But I think we're touching a very deep mystery here.

MOYERS: Do you in your own life just leave it there as a mystery? Or do you think that one can successfully have a marriage and a relationship other than the marriage?

CAMPBELL: Technically, one could say, "Why, yes, of course."

MOYERS: But it seems that whatever one gives to the love affair is barred from the marriage relationship and diminishes the loyalty to the relationship.

CAMPBELL: I think one has to work out these things oneself. There could be a love seizure after you have a commitment to marriage, and it could be such a seizure that not responding to it in right—what can I say?—dull the whole experience of the vitality of love.

MOYERS: I think that's the core of the question. If the eyes scout for the

heart and bring back that which the heart passionately desires—is the heart only going to desire once?

CAMPBELL: Love does not immunize the person to other relationships. Let me just say that. But whether one could have a full-fledged love affair, I mean a real, full-fledged love affair, and at the same time be loyal to the marriage—well, I don't think that could happen now.

MOYERS: Because?

CAMPBELL: It would break off. But loyalty doesn't forbid you to have an affectionate—even a loving relationship to any other person of the opposite sex. The way in which the knightly romances describe the tenderness of the relationships to other women—of one who is being loyal to his own love—is very graceful and sensitive.

MOYERS: The troubadours would sing to the ladies even if there was very little hope of furthering a relationship with them.

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: Now, does mythology say anything about whether it is better to have loved and lost?

CAMPBELL: Mythology in a general way doesn't really deal with the problem of personal, individual love. One marries the one that one is allowed to marry—you know, if you belong to that clan, then you can marry that one but not that one, and so forth.

MOYERS: Then what does love have to do with morality?

CAMPBELL: Violates it.

MOYERS: Violates it?

CAMPBELL: Yes. Insofar as love expresses itself, it is not expressing itself in terms of the socially approved manners of life. That's why it is all so secret. Love has nothing to do with social order. It is a higher spiritual experience than that of socially organized marriage.

MOYERS: When we say God is love, does that have anything to do with romantic love? Does mythology ever link romantic love and God?

CAMPBELL: That's what it did do. Love was a divine experience, and that's why it was superior to marriage. That was the troubadour idea. If God is love, well then, love is God. Meister Eckhart said, "Love knows no pain." And that's exactly what Tristan meant when he said, "I'm willing to accept the pains of hell for my love."

MOYERS: But you've been saying that love now lives suffering.

CAMPBELL: That's the other idea. Tristan was experiencing love. Meister Eckhart was talking about it. The pain of love is not the other kind of pain, it is the pain of life. Where your pain is, there is your life—you might say.

MOYERS: There's that passage in Corinthians where Paul says, "Love beareth all things, endureth all things."

CAMPBELL: That's the same thing.

MOYERS: And yet one of my favorite myths is the story from Persia that Satan was condemned to hell because he loved God so much.

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CAMPBELL: Yes, that's a basic Muslim story about Satan being God's greatest lover. There are a number of ways of thinking about Satan, but this is posed in the question: Why was Satan condemned to hell? The standard story is that, when God created the angels, he told them to bow to none but himself. Then he created man, whom he regarded as a higher form than the angels, and he asked the angels to serve man. And Satan would not bow to man.

Now, this is interpreted in the Christian tradition, as I recall, from my boyhood, instruction, as being the egoism of Satan. He would not bow to man. But in the Persian story, he would not bow to man because of his love for God: he could bow only to God. God had changed his signals, did you see? But Satan had so committed himself to the first set of signals that he could not violate those, and in this I don't know if Satan has a heart or not, but in his mind, he could not bow to anyone but God, whom he loved. And then God says, "Get out of my sight."

Now, the worst of the pains of hell, as far as hell has been described, is the absence of the Beloved, which is God. So, how does Satan sustain the situation in hell? By the memory of the ecstasy of God's voice, when God said, "Go to hell." That is a great sign of love.

MOYERS: Well, it's certainly true in life that the greatest happiness one can know is to be separated from the one you love. That's why I've liked the Persian myth: Satan is God's lover—

CAMPBELL: —and he is separated from God, and that's the real pain of Satan.

MOYERS: There's another story from Persia about the first two parents.

CAMPBELL: That's a great one, yes. They were really one in the beginning and grew as a kind of plant. But then they separated and became two, and begot children. And they loved the children so much that they ate them up, said thought, "Well, this can't go on." So he reduced parental love by something like nine-tenths and nine-tenths percent, so parents wouldn't eat up their children.

MOYERS: What was that myth—

CAMPBELL: I've heard people say, "This is such a delicious little thing, I could eat it up."

MOYERS: The power of love?

CAMPBELL: The power of love.

MOYERS: So intense it had to be reduced.

CAMPBELL: Yes. I saw a parent once, a mother, we'd open a door, looking more, and a heart was in it. That's the kind of love that eats up. That's the kind of love that mothers have to learn to reduce.

MOYERS: Lord, teach me when to let go.

CAMPBELL: Yes. There were in India little rituals to help mothers let go.



India, Margaret
Bourke-White (1906–
71).

Love is the burning point of
life—and since all life is
sorrowful, so is love. The
stronger the love, the more
the pain.

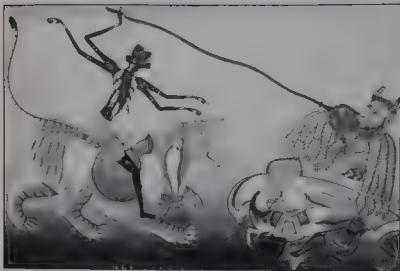
particularly of their sons. The guru, the captain of the family, would come and ask the mother to give him that which she most prized. And it might be some very valuable thing or something. And then there were these exercises, where the mother would be learning to give up that which she most prized. And then finally she would have to give up her son.

MOYERS: So joy and pain are in love.

CAMPBELL: Yes. Love is the burning point of life—and since all life is sorrowful, so is love. The stronger the love, the more the pain.

MOYERS: But love bears all things.

CAMPBELL: Love itself is a pain—you might say—the pain of being truly alive.



Kali Killing the Generals of the Asuras, Ramas Vijn, India, eighteenth century

There are gods of violence, there are gods of compassion, there are gods that unite the worlds of the unseen and the seen. These are all personifications of the energies in play. The ultimate source of the energies remains formless.

VIII

MASKS OF ETERNITY

The images of myth are reflections of the spiritual potentialities of every one of us. Through contemplating these, we evoke their powers in our own lives.



MOYERS: As you've moved among various world views, dipping in and out of cultures, civilizations, and religions, have you found something in common in every culture that creates the need for God?

CAMPBELL: Anyone who has had an experience of mystery knows that there is a dimension of the universe that is not that which is available to his senses. There is a pertinent saying in one of the Upanishads: "When before the beauty of a sunset or of a mountain you pause and exclaim, 'Ah,' you are participating in divinity." Such a moment of participation involves a realization of the wonder and sheer beauty of existence. People living in the world of nature experience such moments every day. They live in the recognition of something there that is much greater than the human dimension. Man's tendency, however, is to personify such experiences, to anthropomorphize natural forces.

Our way of thinking in the West sees God as the final source or cause of the energies and wonder of the universe. But in most Oriental thinking, and in premodern thinking also, the gods are rather manifestations and perversions of an energy that is finally impersonal. They are not its source. The god is the vehicle of its energy. And the force or causality is the energy that is involved

it represents, determines the character and function of the god. There are gods of violence, there are gods of compassion, there are gods that are in the two worlds of the unseen and the seen, and there are gods that are simply the protectors—kings or not—of the two campaigns. These are all personifications of the energies in play. But the ultimate source of the energies remains a mystery.

MOYERS: Doesn't this make fate a kind of infinity—a continuing war among principalities?

CAMPBELL: Yes, as it were, to be sure. Even in our minds—when it comes to making a decision, there will be a war. In acting in relationships with other people, for example, there may be four or five possible lines. The influence of the dominant divinity in my mind will be what determines my decision. If my guiding divinity is benevolent, my decision will be benevolent as well.

MOYERS: What does that tell us, Faith? You're a man of faith, of wonder, and—

CAMPBELL: No, I don't have to have faith, I have experience.

MOYERS: What kind of experience?

CAMPBELL: I have experience of the wonder of life. I have experience of love. I have experience of the majesty and wonder of such things as in the law. From the point of view of symbolic meaning, there are different forces operating in my mind. One may think of them as "deities" for lack of a better word—as inspired by different divinities.

When I was a little boy being brought up as a Roman Catholic, I was told I had a guardian angel on my right shoulder, tempting me to do my duty, and that the devil was on my left shoulder, tempting me to do evil. I was told that the decision I made in life would depend on whether the devil or the angel had the greater influence upon me. As a boy, I was tormented by these thoughts, and I think my teachers did too. We thought there was really an angel there, and that the angel was a force, and that the devil was also a force. But instead of regarding such as forces, we can now think of them as metaphors for the impulses that move and guide me.

MOYERS: Where do these energies come from?

CAMPBELL: From your own life, from the energies of your own body. The different organs in the body, including your mind, are in conflict with each other.

MOYERS: And your life comes from where?

CAMPBELL: From the ultimate energies that sustain the universe. And then do you say, "Well, there must be something generating that energy." Why do you have to say that? Why can't the ultimate mystery be impersonal?

MOYERS: Can men and women live with an impersonality?

CAMPBELL: Yes, they can all over the place. Just go east of Suez. You know there is this tendency in the West to anthropomorphize and accent the humanity of the gods, the personifications. Yipweh, for example, is either a god of wrath, of justice and punishment, or as a loving god who is the support of your life—as we read, for example, in the Psalms. But in the

East, the gods are much more elemental, much less human, and much more like the powers of nature.

MOYERS: When someone says, "I imagine God," the word in our culture will say, "An old man in a long white robe with a beard."

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CAMPBELL: In our culture, yes. It's our fashion to think of God in masculine form, but many traditions think of divine power principally in female form.

MOYERS: The idea is that you cannot imagine what you cannot personally do. Do you think it's possible to enter the mind on what Plato called "things immortal and divine"?

CAMPBELL: Of course. That's what a meditation is. Meditation means constantly thinking on a certain theme. It can be in any level. I don't make a big split in my thinking between the physical and the spiritual. For example, meditation on money is a perfectly good meditation. And bringing up a family is a very important meditation. But there is an alone meditation when you go into the cathedral, for example.

MOYERS: So prayer is actually a meditation.

CAMPBELL: Prayer is relating to and meditating on a mystery.

MOYERS: Calling a power from within.

CAMPBELL: There's a form of meditation you are taught in Roman Catholicism where you recite the rosary, the same prayer over and over and over again. That pulls the mind in. In Sanskrit, this practice is called *japa*, "repetition of the holy name." It blocks other interests out and allows you to concentrate on one thing, and then, depending on your own powers of imagination, to experience the profundity of this mystery.

MOYERS: How does one have a profound experience?

CAMPBELL: By having a profound sense of the mystery.

MOYERS: But if God is the god we have only imagined, how can we stand in awe of our own creation?

CAMPBELL: How can we be terrified by a dream? You have to break past your image of God to get through to the connection. The psychologist Jung has a relevant saying: "Religion is a defense against the experience of God."

The mystery has been reduced to a set of concepts and ideas, emphasizing these concepts and ideas can short-circuit the transendent, connected experience. An intense experience of mystery is what one has to regard as the ultimate religious experience.

MOYERS: There are many Christians who believe that, to find out who Jesus is, you have to go past the Christian faith, past the Christian culture, past the Christian Church—

CAMPBELL: You have to go past the imagined image of Jesus. Such an image of one's god becomes a final instruction, one's ultimate barrier. You hold on to your own ideology, your own little manner of thinking, and when

That's not all. The fact that you're not a Jew is just as important as the fact that you're not a Muslim. This is known as preserving your faith.

There was a lot of excitement and spirit at the different centers or independent sites of experience. The leaders were the community-minded experienced workers, so-called "senior" or "at least possible" members of the community. They had already gone through stages of experience. But they were at the center of the labor's movement and seemed to have been imbued with some of the power of the future and with the idea that you and I can do it. They were so confident of the one line, a line that whole rows of the labor's movement follow. They are at the heart of the work, what is only a few years ago called "service to the people." It signifies the birth of a spirit and is in what is to come, an elementary and necessary, by all the necessary process, the next, the power, and a little fun.

But if so, we cannot say anything about the appearance of a sense of composition, or indeed of any continuity with the past, or why some of the reflections preceding that has been the stage of our mind is a good one, be revised and so forth, is a question that would not only of the property relations with it, but also of the existence of it, and that, and that the continuing quest for some experience of it, the feeling of being it, which all temporal forms are the reflections.

New revelation is revealed through its existence and non-existence as well as form and matter without a fixed standard. When you experience your gods with one, there is something or a mind, and there is no god. There is a subject and there is an object for the ultimate reality, god, as perceived through us. With lotus petals in its fragrance and forms disappear. There is nobody there if god exists. You reach, going past all concepts, as dissolved matter before we are ground of our own being because that to which the concept of "me" – your god refers is self, the mystery of our own being, which is the mystery of the being of the world as well. And so this is it.

At the end of the course we learn that the Christian faith is that God was in Christ, that God came to dwell with the people, that God was in a human being who reconciled mankind to God.

CAN I SAY OF THE PERSON OF THE BAPTIST THAT HE IS true if you think so? Jesus was that true person who revealed to each of us that we are called to that which we are and have out of that knowledge of the Christhood of his nature.

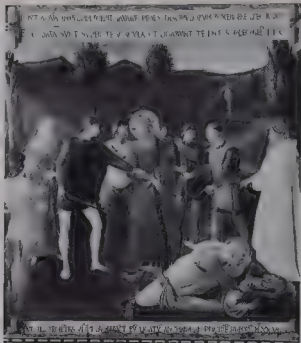
From 1969 I was giving a lecture in which I spoke about living out the sense of the Eucharist as a priest in the audience as I was later told. I said that it was a terrible thing and whispered "I was blasphemous."

MOYERS What did you mean by Christ in you?

AM: Yes. What a relief it was that you measure not in terms of your net net system, your own likes, but in terms of what you might call the sense of mankind, the Christ— you. There is a kind, saying, "None but a god can worship a god." You have to identify yourself in some measure

Betrayal of Christ, Fra Angelico (1387-1455)

There is nothing mystical about Jesus. I don't read anything mystical in any of the Gospels. Peter drew his sword and cut off the servant's ear, and Jesus said, "Put back thy sword Peter." But Peter has his sword and did at work ever since.



a boy about a people who weren't yet and never had been our enemies. In order to represent them as potential enemies, and to justify an attack upon them, a campaign of hatred, misrepresentation, and denigration was launched, of which the echoes ring to this day.

MOTHERS: And yet we read God is love. You once took the saying of Jesus, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven, for he makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust." You once took this to be the highest, the purest, the holiest of all Christ's teachings. Do you still feel that way?

AMERICA: I think of compassion as the fundamental religious experience and, unless that is there, you have nothing.

MOTHERS: I'll tell you what's the most gripping scripture in the Christian New Testament at the moment. Believe. He put it in my hands of a believe in

this ultimate reality that I can find in experience it. But I don't have answers to my questions. The even in the question, is there a soul.

CAMPBELL: A couple of years ago, I had a very amusing experience. I was in the New York Athletic Club swimming pool, where I was introduced to a priest who was a professor at the University of Virginia. So after I had had my swim, I came and sat in a lounge chair in what we call the "horizontal athlete" position, and the priest who was beside me, asked "Now, Mr. Campbell, are you a priest?"

I answered, "No, Father."

He asked, "Are you a Catholic?"

I answered, "I was, Father."

Then he asked—and I think it interesting that he phrased the question in this way—"Do you believe in a personal god?"

"No, Father," I said.

And he replied, "Well, I suppose there's no way to prove by logic the existence of a personal god."

"If there were," Father," said I, "what then would be the value of faith?"

"Well, Mr. Campbell," said the priest quickly, "it's nice to have me say, 'you.' And he was off. I felt I had executed a judo throw.

But that was an illuminating conversation to me. I see that that a Catholic father had asked, "Do you believe in a personal god?" meant to me that he also recognized the possibility of an impersonal god, namely, a transcendent ground of energy in itself. The idea, Buddhist in its soundness as an immanent, luminous consciousness that informs all things and all lives. We anthropologists live by fragments of that consciousness, fragments of that energy. But the religious way of life is to convert in terms of the self-interested intentions of this particular body at this particular time but in terms of the insight of that larger consciousness.

There is an important passage in the recent discovered Gnostic Gospel According to St. Thomas: "When will the kingdom come?" Christ's disciples ask. In Mark 13 I think it is we read that the end of the world is about to come. That is to say, a mystical equivalent of that if the end of the world is to be taken as predicting an actual physical historical fact to be. But in Thomas version, Jesus replies: "The kingdom of the Father will not come by expectation. The kingdom of the Father is spread upon the earth and men do not see it." So look at your own heart sense, and the richness of the presence of the divine is known to me through you.

MOYERS: Through me.

CAMPBELL: Yes, sure. When Jesus says, "He who drinks from my mouth will become as I am and I shall be he," he's talking from the point of view of that being of being which we call the Christ, who is the doing of God. It is. Anyone who lives in relation to that is a Christ. Anyone who brings out into the message of the Word is equivalent to Jesus, that's the sense of that.

MOYERS: So that's what you mean when you say, "I am radiating God to you."

CAMPBELL: You are, yes.

MOYERS: And you to me?

CAMPBELL: And I am speaking this seriously.

MOYERS: I like that. Still, I sense that there is distance between

CAMPBELL: Not only that, but that they represent real conversations and what you're trying to express is the connection of these spiritual principles. So you are the vehicle. You are radiant of the spirit.

MOYERS: Is this true for everyone?

CAMPBELL: It is true for everyone who has reached and is at the level of the heart.

MOYERS: You really believe there is a geography of the psyche?

ANTRAC: This is metaphoric language, but you can say that some people are living in the level of the senses and that is all they're sensing. That's the meaning of that. This is the deeper significance. Then you come to the Adlerian paradigm, which is a power that all life is concerned in, distinct and veridical, no abstractions. Well, you then is a perfectly good life, and there are forms of divinity also. But they're on the animal level. There are other forms of divinity, which involves going oneself to the very core of the heart. Divinity, in this sense, is at the opening of the heart.

MOYERS: What is the source of that life?

CAMPBELL: It may be a religious notion, or it may be a religious truth to be in the two of us. God is in many different life. We ask ourselves when this one life comes from, and people who know everything about it have been made by someone who will think. We understand the source of all this.

MOYERS: Well, then, what is religion?

CAMPBELL: The word "religion" means going back. It always is the going back in both cases, then my separate self has been linked to the one life and is linked back. This has been the symbol of the images of religion, which represent that connecting link.

MOYERS: Long ago Jung's psychoanalyst says that one of the most powerful religious symbols is the circle. He says that the circle is one of the great primordial images of mankind and that if we consider the symbol of the circle, we are arriving at the self. What do you make of that?

CAMPBELL: The whole world is a circle. All of these circles that you see reflect the psyche, so there may be some relationship between these intricate natural designs and the actual structure of our spiritual functions.

When a magician wants to work magic, he puts a circle in and through it, and it is a thin, thin bounded circle, thus here, thus, a sacred circle, that powers can be brought to pass that are outside the circle.

MOYERS: I remember reading about a bird and a hawk who said, "When we perch camp, we perch a camp in a circle. When the eagle builds a nest, its nest is in a circle. When we look at the horizon, the horizon is in a circle." Circles were very important to some Indians, weren't they?

CAMPBELL: Yes. But they're so common that we've inherited them



Faustus and Mephistopheles.

When a magician wants to work magic, he puts a circle around himself and it is within this bounded circle this hermetically sealed-off area, that powers can be brought into play that are *fine* outside the circle.

Summer and winter. We've placed the circle with its four cardinal points and three hundred and sixty degrees. The circle's circumference was three hundred and sixty days with its own days that don't come when we're outside of time and in which they had ceremonies relating their subjects to the heavens. Now we're losing this sense of the circle's relation to time because we have digital time, where you just have time jumping by, like at the digital you get the sense of the flow of time. At Grand Central in New York there's a clock with the hours, the minutes, the seconds, a feature of seconds, and the hundredths of seconds. When you see the hundredth of a second buzzing by, you realize how time is running through you.

The circle on the other hand represents time, everything within its circle is one thing, which is circled, contained. That would be the spatial aspect. But the temporal aspect, the circularity, always somewhere and a way come back, ends to the beginning, the source and the end. The circle suggests immediately a completed unity, whether in time or in space.

MOYERS No beginning, no end

CAMERON Round and round the round. Take the year, for example. When November is almost over, well, it's Thanksgiving. Then December comes, and we have Christmas. In November, just a month and round again, but also the moon cycle, the day cycle. We're reminded of this when we look at our watches and see the circle of time, it's the same hour, but another day.

MOYERS Can you describe the Kingdom of the Center and the Arcs and its meaning about the two circles? I suppose every state using the circle as the emblem of its identity is at the center. Why do you suppose the circle became so universally symbolic?

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AMPEL Because we experienced it the time of the day in the year in our life, going on our venture, hunting or whatever it may be, and coming back home. Then there is a deeper experience, the mystery of the womb and the tomb. When people are buried, they are reborn. That's the circle itself, but it doesn't go some way back to the womb of mother earth, for rebirth. Very early images of the goddess show her as a mother receiving the soul back again.

MOYERS When I read *Upanishads: The Mystics of India* or *The Way of Zen*, *Arenas of Zen*, or *The Zenith Image*, I often come across images of the circle, whether it is in magical designs or in where the artist is, and it is modern, whether it is in the dome of a temple or in the Pikes of the rock engravings of Rapa Nui, or the ancient stones of the Arcs or the ancient Chinese bronze coins or the Chinese thought of a Test and a prop of Ezekiel, who talks about the wheel in the sky. I keep coming across this image. And this ring, in wedding rings, is a circle, too. What does that symbolize?

AMPEL That depends on how you understand marriage. The wedding symbol itself means two things put together. One person was the wife, the other the other half, and then they come together. Religion comes from putting the ring together, the completed circle. That is my marriage, this is the marriage, and what I do is to merge a third thing, where the two are one. The ring indicates that we are now one together.

MOYERS When a new pope is elected he takes the fishermen's ring, another circle.

AMPEL That particular ring symbolizes Jesus and the apostles who were fishermen. He said, "I will make you fishers of men." This is a claim that says that Christianity is a fisherman. Christus is called the "Fisherman" who fishes men who are living in the water, up into the air. It is an old idea of the metamorphosis of the fisherman. The fisherman is the crudest of materialists of each character, and the religious man is intended to pull you up out of that.

MOYERS A new king of new queens of England is wearing the coronation ring.

AMPEL Yes, as these tracks in their aspects, the ring is a bridge. As king, you are a ruler, a ruler of people. You are a ruler of a society, a way you have seen marked by your nature, which people are scarred and returned, and re-banded to another order of society.

MOYERS Jung speaks of the circle as a mandala.

AMPEL Mandala is the Sanskrit word for circle. It means that it is contained, it is symbolically designed so that it has the meaning of a command. When composing a mandala, you are trying to find a way out of your personal circle with the universal circle. In every culture, Buddha, Siddhartha, for example, you do the duty in the center, the power source,

the illumination source. The peripheral images would be manifestations or aspects of the deity's radiance.

In working out a mandala for yourself, you draw a circle, and then think of the different impulse systems and value systems in your life. Then you compose them and try to find out where your center is. Making a mandala is a discipline of putting all these scattered aspects of your life together, or finding a center and tracing yourself back. You try to find more your circle with the universal circle.

MOYERS: To be at the center?

CAMPBELL: At the center, yes, for instance, among the Navaho Indians, healing ceremonies are conducted with such sand paintings, which are mostly mandalas on the ground. The person who is to be treated moves into the mandala as a way of moving into a mythological context that he will be identifying with. He identifies himself with the symbolized power. This idea of sand painting with mandalas—and the use for meditative purposes—appears also in Tibet. Tibetan monks practice sand painting, drawing symbolic images to represent the forces of the spiritual powers that operate in our lives.

MOYERS: There's some effort, apparently, to try to center one's feeling at the center of the universe—

CAMPBELL: By way of methodical imagery, yes. The image helps you to identify with the symbolized force. You can't very well expect a person to identify with an indeterminate and something or other. But when you give it qualities that point toward certain realizations, the person can follow.

MOYERS: There is one theory that the Holy Grail represented the center of perfect harmony, the search for perfection, for beauty and an ideal.

CAMPBELL: There are a number of sources for the Holy Grail. One is that there's a tradition of entry into the mission of the goal, the seeking down in the depths of the unconscious, at some of the depths of the unconscious, that the energies of the center rise. This condition is the inexhaustible source, the center, the bubbling spring from which all life proceeds.

MOYERS: Do you think that is the unconscious?

CAMPBELL: Not only the unconscious but also the value of the world. Things are coming to be around you all the time. There's a life pouring into the world, and it pours from an inexhaustible source.

MOYERS: Now, what do you make of that—that in very different cultures, separated by time and space, the same imagery emerges?

CAMPBELL: This speaks for certain powers in the psyche that are common to all mankind. Otherwise you couldn't have such detailed correspondences.

MOYERS: So if you find that many different cultures tell the story of creation, or the story of a virgin birth, or the story of a savior who comes and dies and is resurrected, they are saying something about what's inside us, and our need to understand.

CAMPBELL: That's right. The images themselves reflect upon the

spiritual potentialities of every one of us. Through contemplating these we evoke their powers in our own lives.

AMERSON. So what is the first myth, the first man being made in clay? Is it a myth about certain qualities that every human being possesses, no matter what that person's race, or nationality, or geography, or face type?

CHAMBERLAIN. Good word, because it is an elementary, deontic myth.

MOYERS. The primal need.

AMERSON. And we are all made in the image of God. That is the ultimate archetype of man.

MOYERS. He speaks out at the still point, the turning word, where motion and stasis are together for the first time, the movement of time and the stillness of eternity are together.

AMERSON. That is the next myth, carrier myth is re-created by the Christ. When he comes into being, it is neither in the past, nor in the future, nor in the present. There is no past, because it has to be destroyed and destroyed. When you can get out of fear and lose it and not get back it, where you are becoming yourself for the spot, that is as good as a victory in the living and not in the dead, in the becoming and the changing, not in what has already been done and set fast. So there is no concern, he starts with, striving toward the divine through the becoming and the changing, which in a sense makes use of the self, but what is known is known and so to be used for the shaping of a life. But the goal is not a goal for knowledge of yourself, it is to be found that that turning point in yourself, that becoming, giving to yourself, which is a movement of the world and out of the world, is utterly becoming and therefore fearless and fearless. That is the condition of a warrior going into battle with perfect courage. It is his life in movement. That is the essence of the mysticism. It is as well as of a plant growing. I think a grass will grow every two weeks, a crop comes out with a new flower, the old is laid down. Suppose the grass were to say, "Well, for Peter's sake, wait for me. I'm not getting out of this way." Instead it keeps on growing. That is the use of the energy of the center. It is still the meaning of the image of the Christ, of the teacher, of the prophet, of the savior. The source doesn't care what happens, it gives into being. It is the giving and coming into being of the world, and that is the meaning of life, of it in you. That's what all these myths are concerned to tell you.

In the study of comparative mythology, we compare the images in one system with the images in another, and then become frustrated because one will resist and we don't explain it to one aspect of the myth, and another to another. They clarify each other.

When I started teaching comparative myth, I was told I ought to destroy my students' religious beliefs, and what I found was not the opposite, but my teacher is what I had in mind, not in them, but which were the ones their parents had given them, so I don't become frustrated in a new way, when we compared myth with other traditions, where similar images had been given, in a ritual, or a special interpretation.

There's this fear, let's say, of students, but that students see signs of Zoroastrian students, they all see this existence. There is no danger in interpreting the symbols of a religious system and seeing them in metaphors

instead of facts. What that does is to turn them into messages of your own inward experience and life. The system suddenly becomes a personal experience.

MOYERS: I feel stronger in my own faith knowing that others experienced the same yearnings and were seeking for similar images to try to express an experience beyond the constraints of ordinary human language.

CAMBELL: This is why clown and clown religions are helpful. Germanic and Celtic myths are full of clowning, really grotesque stuff. This makes the point I am now the female image. I am transparent to something. Look through me, through my funny form.

MOYERS: There's a wonderful story in the African tradition of the god who's walking down the road wearing a hat that is colored red on one side and blue on the other side. When the farmers in the field go into the village in the evening they say, "Did you see that god with the blue hat?" And the others say, "No, no, he had a red hat on." And they get into a fight.

CAMBELL: Yes, that's the Nigerian trickster god, Eshu. He makes it even worse by first walking in one direction and then turning around and turning his hat around, so that again it will be red on blue. Then when these two clans get into a fight and are bringing before the king for judgment, this trickster god appears, and he says, "It's my fault, I did it, and I meant to do it. Spreading strife is my greatest joy."

MOYERS: There's a truth in that.

CAMBELL: There sure is. Here it is said strife is the greatest of all great things. Something like that may be implicit in this symbolic trickster idea.



Pueblo clowns, Otis Poldosna.

No matter what the system of thought you may have, it can't possibly include boundless life. Clown and clown religions make the point: "I am not the ultimate image, I am transparent to something. Look through me, through my funny form."



*Victory of Samothrace,
ca. 200 B.C.*

When a someone's rhythm has been struck by the artist, you experience a resonance. You are held in aesthetic arrest. That is the epiphany. And that is what might in religious terms be thought of as the all informing Christ principle coming through.

MOYERS: The face of the saint beholding God?

CAMPBELL: It doesn't matter what it is. You could take someone whom you might think of as a monster. The aesthetic experience transcends ethics and didactics.

MOYERS: That's where I would disagree with you. It seems to me that in order to experience the epiphany, the object you behold *it* do not want to possess must be beautiful in some way. And a moment ago, when you talked about your peak experience, naming it, you said it was beautiful. "Beautiful" is an aesthetic word. Beauty is the harmony.

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: And yet you said it's also in Joyce's epiphanies—and that concerns art and the aesthetic.

CAMPBELL: Yes.

MOYERS: It seems to me they are the same. I look at such beauty, I am
can you behold a monster and have an epiphany?

AMATEL: There's an emotional association with it, which is not
of the beautiful but of the sublime. What we call monsters can be experi-
enced as sublime. They represent powers too vast for the human capacity of
life to contain them. An immense expanse of space is sublime. The
Buddhists know how to achieve this effect in situating their temples, which
are often up a high hill. For example, some of the temple gardens in Japan
are designed so that you will first be experiencing descent and then ascent in the
mountains. Meanwhile, you're climbing, until suddenly you break past a screen
and an expansive horizon is out there, and somehow, with this little sentiment
of your own effort, you're suddenly experiencing the expanse of the
sublime.

And it makes the sublime not primarily an emotional power,
I've known a number of people who were in Vietnam. For a lot of the
Anglo-American situation, burnings of their cities, and several have
described this sublime experience as not only terrible but in a certain
sublime.

MOYERS: I have interviewed a veteran of the Second World War. I talked
to him about his experience of the Battle of the Bulge, in that bitter winter
when the surprise German assault was almost successful. I said, "As you look
back on it, what was it?" And he said, "It was sublime."

AMATEL: And so the monster is the thing which is terrible and

MOYERS: And by the monster you mean—

AMATEL: By monster I mean some human presence or presence
that explodes all of your standards of human order, making contact
for example. As you sit at the end of the world, you see a monster. There is
no destroying the universe, first with fire, and then with a nuclear flood
that blows out the fire and everything else. Nothing left but ash. The
whole universe with its noise and laws is seen utterly wiped out. That's
God in the role of destroyer. Such experiences go past all of our moral
judgments. Ethics is a peculiar. Where is morality with that? It's all
on the human scale is also a record in the ethical, and so qualified as
good. But God is terrible. Any god who can overthrow is to end fire
for the Soviet or Army. The end of the world, that's it. But there's
Muslim saying about the Angel of Azrael. When the Angel of Azrael
approaches, he is terrible. When he reaches you, it is bliss.

In Buddhist visions, more especially those of Tibet, the meditative
Buddhas present two aspects, the perfect and the otherworldly. If you
are clinging to your ego and its tiny responsibility, the enormous and
now binding on the deity, it will be the wrathful aspect of the deity that
appears. It will seem terrifying. But the moment you egolessly give up
that's the meditative Buddhist experienced as benevolent face.

MOYERS: Less likely, I'm thinking, sword and a knife which he might
take away your life. He's not it up there, egoless and the ego
come to cut you free from the binding ego of your own self.

AMATEL: This is what is known in Sufi or Sufi's work, "discovery
from." There's a very important Buddhist teaching, as you know, the ego



Vishnu as Varaha, the Cosmic Boar, Slays a Demon General, India, ca. 1800.

Vishnu at the end of the world appears as a monster. He wipes out the whole universe, with all its life and lives. That's God in the role of destroyer. Such experiences go past ethical or aesthetic judgments. Ethics is wiped out.

flaming sword high over his head—and so what's that sword for? It is the sword of discrimination—separating the merely temporal from the eternal. It is the sword of distinguishing that which is enduring from that which is merely passing. The tick-tick-tack of time shuts out eternity. We live in this field of time. But what is reflected in this field is a timeless, principle-minded manifest.

MOYERS: The experience of the eternal.

CAMPBELL: The experience of what you are.

MOYERS: Yes, but whatever eternity is, it is here right now.

CAMPBELL: And now here else. Or everywhere else. If you can't experience it here and now, you're not going to get it in heaven. Heaven is not eternal, it's just everlasting.

MOYERS: I don't follow that.

CAMPBELL: Heaven and hell are described as timeless. Heaven is a time-ending time. It is not eternal. Eternal is beyond time. The concept of time shuts out eternity. It is over the ground of that deep experience of eternity that all of these temporal pains and troubles come and go. There is a Buddhist ideal of participating willingly and joyfully in the passing sorrows of the world. Wherever there is time, there is sorrow. But this experience of sorrow moves over a sense of enduring being, which is our own true life.

MOYERS: Then's some image of Shiva, the god Shiva, surrounded by circles of flame, rings of fire.

A. The Heaven of
Sukhavati, Tibet,
fifteenth century.
B. Mahakala, Tibet,
eighteenth century.

The meditation *tridhais* appear in two aspects, in peaceful, and the other wrathful. If you're clinging fiercely to your ego and its little temporal world hanging on for dear life, it's the wrathful aspect that will appear. But the moment your ego goes up, that same meditation *tridhai* is experienced as a bestower of bliss.



AMBI: That's wonderful. The goddess Shesha Devi is the universe. In his human skin, Lord Venkateswara incarnated at the same moment the moment of becoming. One moment he's a little drum that goes tick tick tick. That is the beginning time, the tick tick which starts our knowledge to come. We're closed in time. But in Shesha's opposite hand there's a fan which blows away that time and opens our minds to eternity.

Shesha Devi is the universe, perhaps the most important step in the world of time. There are images from 2000 or 2500 B.C. of a lotus standing with showing figures that clearly suggest Shiva.

It says, "This is the universe. He's the Lord of the universe, representing the terrible aspects of the universe here. He's the universe, the cosmic, the dimension of the universe, so the character of his is imperator, which is uniminator.



MYER: Myths deal with metaphysics. But religion deals with ethics, good and evil, and how I am to relate to you and you should behave toward you and toward my wife and toward my fellow man, toward God. What is the place and role of ethics in mythology?

CAMERON: We speak of the metaphysical experience in which you realize that you and the other are one. Ethics is a way of teaching us how to live as though you were one with the other. You'd not have to have the experience because the doctrine of the religion gives you models of actions that imply a compass, state relations with the other. It offers an incentive for doing this by teaching you that simply acting in your own self-interest is sin. That is identification with your body.

MYERS: I see this metaphor is thus: "Be as thy neighbor is thus."

AMPHLE: That is what you have learned when you've done so.

**Monju, Tibet,
fourteenth to fifteenth
century.**

*There is a very important
Buddha figure holding a
sword high over his head—it
is the sword of
discrimination, separating
the merely temporal from
the eternal.*



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**Shiva Nataraja, Lord of
the Dance, South India,
eleventh century.**

*In Shiva's hair is a skull and
a crescent moon: death and
rebirth at the same moment
the moment of becoming. In
one hand he has a little
drum that goes tick tick tick.
That is the drum of time
which shows out the
knowledge of eternity. But
in the opposite hand is a
flame which burns away the
veil of time and opens our
mind to eternity.*

M. MYERS: Why do you think so many people have a deep yearning to live forever?

CAMPBELL: That's something I don't understand.

M. MYERS: Does it come out of the fear of hell and the desperate alternative?

CAMPBELL: That's good standard Christian doctrine—that at the end of the world men will be a general judgment and those who have acted virtuously will be sent to heaven and those who have acted in an evil way, to hell.

This is a theme that goes back to Egypt. Osiris is the god who died and was resurrected and in his eternal aspect was the judge of the dead. Mummification was to prepare the person to face the god. But an interesting thing in Egypt is that the person going to the god is the resurrection, his identity with the god. In the Christian tradition that's not always so. So if you're saying that the alternative is hell or heaven, well, give me heaven forever. But when you realize that heaven is a bursting of the death image of God—that would be a timeless moment. Time explodes—again, eternity.



is not something everlasting. You can have it right here, now, in your experience of your earthly relationships.

I've lost a lot of friends, as well as my parents. A realization has come to me very, very kindly, however, that I haven't lost them. That moment when I was with them has an everlasting quality about it that is now still with me. What it gave me then is still with me, and there's a kind of immortality or immortality in that.

There is a story of the Buddha who encountered a woman who had just lost her son, and she was in great grief. The Buddha said, "I suggest that you just ask an old farmer, somebody who has not lost a treasured child, his husband, or his wife, or friend." Understanding the transience of mortality to something, in you, that's transcendent, immortality is a difficult task.

MOYERS: Myths are full of the desire for immortality, are they not?

CAMPBELL: Yes. But when immortality is misunderstood as being an everlasting body, it turns into a counterfeit reality. On the other hand, when immortality is understood to be an experience with that which is eternal in your own life now, it's something else again.

MOYERS: You've said that the whole question of life revolves around being versus becoming.

AMERB: Yes. Becoming is always eternal. And being is eternal.

MOYERS: What do you mean?

CAMPBELL: Well, let's say you are going to become fully human in the first few years you are a child, and that's only a fraction of the human being. In a few more years you are an adolescence, and that is certainly a fraction of the human being. In nature you are still fracturing—you are not a child, but you are not an adult. There's an image in the light and shade of the ego, a concentrated energy which was the beginning of creation that set forth the world, assigning all things to the fragmentariness of time. But to see through the fragments of time to the full power of original being—that is a function of art.

MOYERS: Beauty is an expression of that rapture of being, is it?

CAMPBELL: Every moment should be such an experience.

MOYERS: And what we are going to become tomorrow is not important as compared to this experience.

CAMPBELL: This is the great moment. But what we are trying to do in a certain way is to get the being. Your subject remained through this part as why we have of expressing it.

MOYERS: But if we can't describe God, if our language is not adequate, how is it that we build these buildings that are sublime? How do we create these works of art that reflect what artists think of God? How do we do this?

AMERB: Well, that's what art reflects—what artists think of God, what people experience of God. But the ultimate, unqualified mystery is beyond human experience.

MOYERS: So whatever it is we experience we have to express in language that is just not up to the occasion.

CAMPBELL: That's it. That's what poetry is. Poetry is language that has to be penetrated. Poetry involves a process where it words that we have simplified and suggestions that go past the words themselves. I wish you experience the radiance, the epiphany. The epiphany is the shining forth of the essence.

MOYERS: So the experience of God is beyond description, but we're compelled to try to describe it?

CAMPBELL: That's what Schopenhauer in his splendid essay called "On an Apparent Intention in the Fate of the Individual" points out that when you reach an advanced age and look back over your lifetime, it seems to have had a consistent order and plan, as though it's composed by some power. Events that when they occurred had seemed accidental and disconnected, turn out to have been indispensable actors in the development of a consistent plot. So who composed that plot? Schopenhauer suggests that just as your dreams are composed by an aspect of yourself, a watchful consciousness, so awake, so too, your whole life is composed by the will within you. And just as people whom you will have met apparently by mere chance have been leading agents in the structuring of your life, so too, you have served unknowingly as an agent, giving meaning to the lives of others. The whole thing joins together in one big symphony with everything and everyone structuring everything else. And Schopenhauer concludes that this is the truth of our lives: we're the testicles of the one great dream of a single universe in which all the dream characters dream, so that everything has to everything else, moved by the one will of life which is the universal will in nature.

It's a magnificent idea, in fact, that appears to exist in the mythic image of the Net of Indra, which is a net of gems, where if every one of the one treading over another there is a gem reflecting the other reflective gems. Everything arises in mutual relation to everything else, so you can't blame anybody for anything. It's even, as though there were a single intention behind it all, which always makes a great kind of sense, though no one of us knows what the sense might be. It's his lived the life that he quite intended.

MOYERS: And yet we all have lived a life that had a purpose. Do you believe that?

CAMPBELL: I don't believe life has a purpose. Life is a lot of protoplasm with an urge to reproduce and continue in being.

MOYERS: Not true—not true.

CAMPBELL: Well, a minute I'll show him it must be said to have a purpose, because look at all the different purposes it has all over the place. But each incarnate in you must say, as a potentiality, and the mass mind itself, I love that potentiality. How do you do it? My answer is: Follow your bliss. There's something inside you that knows when you're in the center, that knows when you're on the ocean front the beach. And the worst of the beam to earn money, you've lost your life. And the worst of the center, you don't get any money, you still have your bliss.

MOYERS: I like the idea that it's not the destination that counts, it's the journey.

CAMPBELL: Yes. As Karlene Cra. Duckham says, "When you're at a point, and the end keeps getting further and further away, then you realize that the real end is the journey."

The Navaho have that wonderful image of what they call the pollen path. Pollen is the life source. The pollen path is the path to the center. The Navaho say, "Oh, beauty before me, beauty behind me, beauty to the right of me, beauty to the left of me, beauty above me, beauty below me. I'm on the pollen path."

MOYERS: Eden was not. Eden will be.

CAMPBELL: Eden is. The kingdom of the Father is spread upon the earth, and men do not see it.

MOYERS: Eden isn't in this world of pain and suffering and death and violence?

CAMPBELL: That's the way it feels, but it's not. This is Eden. When you see the kingdom spread upon the earth, the old way of living in the world is annihilated. That is the end of the world. The end of the world is not an event to come; it is an event of psychological transformation of voluntary transformation. You see not the world of solid things but a world of radiance.

MOYERS: I interpret that powerful and mysterious statement. The word was made flesh? Is this eternal principle bringing itself in the human journey, in our experience?

CAMPBELL: And you can find the word in yourself, too.

MOYERS: Where do you find it if you don't find it in yourself?

CAMPBELL: It's been said that poetry consists of letting the words be heard beyond words. And C. G. Jung says, "All things are metaphors. Everything that's transitory is but a metaphorical reference. That's what we all are."

MOYERS: But now looks one word for a metaphor. We're a metaphor, I'd say for a metaphor.

CAMPBELL: That's what people are doing all over the place—dying for metaphors. But when you really realize the sound, AUM, the sound of the mystery of the word everywhere, then you don't have to go out and die for anything because it's right there all around. Just sit still and see it and experience it and know it. That's a peak experience.

MOYERS: Explain AUM.

CAMPBELL: "AUM" is a word that represents to our ears that sound of the energy of the universe of which all things are manifestations. You start in the back of the mouth, "ah," and then, "ee," you feel the motion, and "mm" closes the mouth. When you pronounce this properly, all vowel sounds are included in its pronunciation. All M consonants are then regarded simply as interruptions of the essential vowel sound. All vowels are thus fragments of AUM, just as all images are fragments of the form of forms. AUM is a symbolic sound that puts you in touch with that resonating being that's the universe. If you heard some of the recordings of Tibetan

monks chanting *Ai M*, you would know what the word means at right. That's the *Ai M* of being in the world. To be in touch with that word is to get the sense of that is the peak experience of a.

Ai M. The *butta* *du* coming into being, and the dissolution that cycles back. *Ai M* is called the "fourth element" visible. "A *Ai M*," and what is the fourth element? The silence out of which *Ai M* arises, and back into which it goes, and which underlies it. *Ma* is the *Ai M*, but there is a silence underlying it, *ma*. That is what we would call the immortal. This is the mortal, and that's the immortal, and there would not be the mortal if there weren't the immortal. One must discriminate between the mortal aspect and the immortal aspect—the transient existence, in the experience of my mother and father who are gone, of whom I was born, I have come to understand that there is more than what was our temporary relationship. Of course there were certain moments in that relationship when, in emphasis, demonstration of what the relationship was would be brought to my realization. I clearly remember some of those. They stand out as moments of epiphany, of revelation, of the radiance.

MOYERS: The meaning is essentially wordless.

CAMPBELL: Yes. Words are always approximations and limitations.

MOYERS: And yet for all our pains human beings are left with this miserable language, beautiful though it is, that is so short of trying to describe—

CAMPBELL: That's right, and that's why it is a peak experience to break past all that, every now and then, and to realize, "Oh . . . ah . . ."

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"I never met anyone who could better tell a story. Listening to Joseph Campbell talk of primal societies, I was transported to the wide plains under the great dome of the open sky, or to the forest dense, beneath a canopy of trees, and I began to understand how the voices of the gods spoke from the wind and thunder, and the spirit of God flowed in every *moment of existence*; and the whole earth bloomed as a sacred place—the realm of mythic imagination."

—Bill Moyers

Joseph Campbell, who died on October 31, 1987, was the world's foremost authority on mythology, a preeminent scholar, writer, and teacher whose work has had a profound influence on millions. To him, mythology was "the song of the universe, the music of the spheres."

In *THE POWER OF MYTH*, he and distinguished journalist Bill Moyers offer a brilliant combination of wisdom and wit in conversations that range from modern marriage ("Marriage is a relationship. When you make the sacrifice in marriage, you're sacrificing not to each other but to unity in a relationship") to virgin births, from savior figures to heroic figures such as Luke Skywalker from *Star Wars* ("... By overcoming the dark passions, the hero symbolizes our ability to control the irrational savages within us").

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Joseph Campbell began his career in 1934 as an instructor at Sarah Lawrence College, where he taught for almost forty years, and where the Joseph Campbell Chair in Comparative Mythology was established in his honor.

Bill Moyers is an acclaimed television journalist, widely respected for his work both at CBS News and at PBS, where one of his primary efforts has been to bring to television outstanding thinkers of our time.

Betty Sue Flowers teaches poetry and myth at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author and co-author of several books, including *Browning and the Modern Tradition*, *Four Shields of Power*, and *Daughters and Fathers*.

Cover photograph of a dragon medallion from an emperor's sarcophagus, Qing Dynasty, 1680-1875/Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada

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